Richard Grossinger
Homeopathy: The Great Riddle

Extrait du livre

Homeopathy: The Great Riddle
de Richard Grossinger
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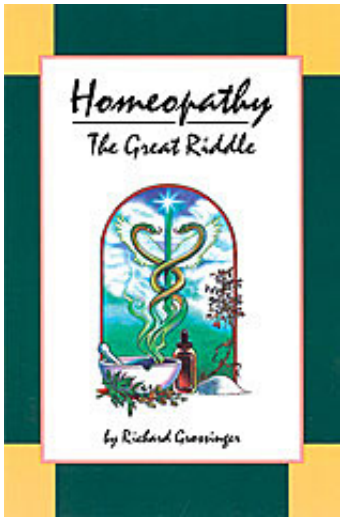

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Preface

There are many books on how to practice homeopathic medicine, its remedies and character types. This book, *Homeopathy: The Great Riddle,* is an attempt to understand what homeopathy is.

Defining homeopathy is not a simple matter. For one, it has no coherent physical, biochemical, or anatomical theory, at least by modern experimental standards. Homeopathy originates from an historical event at the close of the eighteenth century and has not been definitively reevaluated or updated since. It has rested solely, since then, on its apparent and mystifying success in curing serious and chronic diseases. Meanwhile, its language, science, and philosophy have remained in much the state they were at its inception despite monumental change in the rest of the world.

Chapter 2, "The Origins of Homeopathic Medicine," discusses the medical and pharmaceutical systems that preceded homeopathy and from which it assembled its methods and rationales. Without understanding prior systems that are similar to homeopathy, it is difficult to see how homeopathy arrived at its unusual tenets. Notably none of these other systems has survived intact into the present.

The core of this book is Chapter 3, "The Principles and Methodology of Homeopathic Medicine." In this section I have summarized the belief system behind homeopathy, pointing out both the ways in which it is convincing and the ways in which it is fantastic and requires a leap of faith. The major premises of homeopathic medicine cannot be concretized; thus, homeopathy must explain itself by a mixture of archaic and futuristic paradigms, ranging from alchemy to chaos theory. My purpose in this chapter is neither to acclaim nor refute homeopathy but to disclose its workings.

Chapter 4 reviews the discovery and development of homeopathy by Samuel Hahnemann and explains how the German physician codified a highly unorthodox healing system while fancying he was engaged in mainstream research.

Chapter 5 describes homeopathy's temporary triumph in nineteenth-century North America, followed by its almost total demise in the early years of the twentieth century, then its revival in the 1970s. The wave of scientific enthusiasm that made homeopathy the supreme American medicine at the time of the Civil War and in the decades thereafter changed direction in the early twentieth century and utterly dashed it. In a startlingly short period of time, homeopathy went from the most progressive and modern medicine known to man to a museum piece. Once laboratory science looked closely at homeopathy, Hahnemann's thesis seemed-to unravel into folklore and superstition; it was quickly dismissed. Yet when the counterculture brought new paradigms into society (and healing), homeopathy was mercurially reborn.

Appendices include a case history and a comparison of homeopathy to other alternative and conventional medical systems.

Certain areas touched on in this book are covered in greater depth in my other writings.

Morphogenetic theories behind microdose activity are examined throughout my embryology book, *Getting Made: Species, Gender, and Identity* (North Atlantic Books, 1998).

Alchemical medicine is described in detail in an essay "Alchemy: Pre-Egyptian Legacy, Millennial Promise" in my anthology entitled *The Alchemical Tradition in the Late Twentieth Century* (North Atlantic Books, 1979, 1991).

The relation of homeopathy to other alternative medicines is explored throughout my two-volume work on the history and philosophy of medicine: *Planet Medicine: Origins* and *Planet Medicine: Modalities* (North Atlantic Books, 1996). In fact, a much briefer version of *Homeopathy: The Great Riddle* appeared in the early edition, *Planet Medicine: From Stone Age Shamanism to Post-Industrial Healing* (Doubleday Anchor, 1980; Shambhala Publications, 1982; North Atlantic Books, 1987, 1990). It was first published in its own volume in 1993 as *Homeopathy: An Introduction for Beginners and Skeptics* and then revised in 1998 into its present form.

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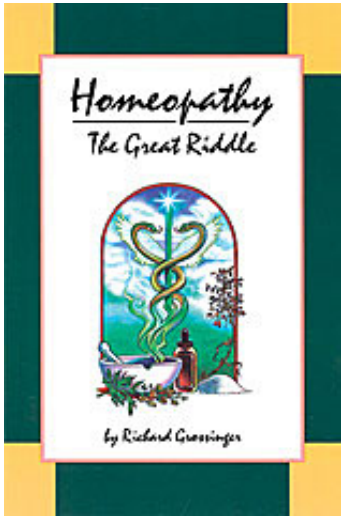

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