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Chaos Magical Ontology and Complementary Medicine –Draft.

Introduction

In this paper what we want to offer is quite possibly the most satisfying and infuriating answer to all the effectivity of complementary medicine you're going to find and this holds true whether you are a skeptic or believer. The notion is grounded in a certain kind of philosophical position. I appreciate most of you –the readership– are not philosophers or chaos magician. I hope you can bear with me in as simple elucidation as I can manage to render the overall point cogent. Initially the paper covers the idea of vector theory, before considering some of the problems that the effectivity of complementary medicine faces. The convincingness of some claims of CM is taken seriously but counterposed against its failure to show up in RCTs. The conclusion is that CM needs to retreat to basically a magical explanation but that rationalists should not treat this as a retreat into nonsense.

Vector theory

Vector theory says that everything you, as a conscious being perceive and understand, is in some way just the best understanding you (we) have and can only be considered to be that thing insofar as it behaves in a certain manner (meets criteria that we have agreed in order for us to use that word for it). In a sense it cannot even be said to be a thing, since a thing as a concept is itself an understanding of what we call in vector theory, the vector field. So the things around you are not those things independently of you, rather can only truly be said to be those things by your interpretation. The cup isn't a cup, it is the information of the cup that is truly the cup, the concept.

The vector field is what you can see when you pretend that everything around you is just unnamed stuff (this includes verbs as well but we don't need to get into this here). The vector field is all around you, you cannot escape it, furthermore (to repeat) the vector field is always understood as *something* (this notion is drawn from hermeneutic philosophy). That region of it there is understood as a table, that region of it there is understood as a phone. The way in which the field seems easily broken down into separate parts is how we understand thing or object (discrete regions). You can go on naming the word-rules we have for the various sections of the vector field for a very long time. Over our history we've learned to categorise the vector field in increasingly complex ways. Ideas build up and as long as the region of the vector field makes communicable sense to the rules we've made up to understand that region, then we continue to use those rules for it. Sometimes of course it changes, like when we reclassify animals or plants. In these cases a different concept may be applied to a vector region.

So far so good. So to reiterate, the vector field is kind of like pretending that everything (including yourself) is just an amorphous sea of undifferentiated stuff, which you can then flip your mind back

to seeing *as* a series of what we call objects and spaces between them. Where's this going you may ask yourself? What does some kind of phenomenological-perceptual account have to do my complementary healing practice? Well, it turns out a lot, or at least I think so.

Problems for some complementary medicine

To move on we have to focus the enquiry a little bit. A lot of what is driving this paper is that in complementary medicine a good many practices have little or no evidence base. Now some of them may not have been tested so these must fall outside of the argument scope. However a lot of them have and in a good many cases the evidence base is poor to non-existent; homeopathy, some aspects of herbal medicine and acupuncture are examples of this. It is this evidence poor land that we wish to talk about.

If you use practices that the establishment says are bunk but feel sure or at least have sneaking sense they may not be then, don't worry (at least not about being a looney). Lots of people think this. We often call it 'energetics' and sometimes weirdly apply the partial-¹misnomer 'holistic'. As practitioners and students with an interest we often want to write about it in our essays. Yet doing so often has the strangely dissatisfying sensation that we can't actually ground anything we want to say in anything other than energetics texts (which obviously tends to presuppose the reality of the system it wants to talk about (a kind of question begging)). The whole thing becomes a kind of club of 'this isn't bollocks is it? I mean that guy I treated with flower essences really seemed to respond' backed up by a few scientific articles that either don't say what we're told they said or are have been heavily criticised for being hopelessly unscientific (examples).

There was a time when one could work in this way and it was much more compatible with the world around you. This world was a prescientific one or least a world where prescientific attitudes still were able to proliferate happily. Nowadays it is not so easy and mostly that's a good thing –the benefits have been vast². What do I mean by any of that? Just that nowadays especially in a western, relatively wealthy society it's harder to get away with supplying a treatment that has no scientific

¹ Holistic is a misnomer insofar as various energetic practices are quite capable of treating symptomatically and the meaning of the term in is often quite opaque to the practitioner at any depth greater than glib phrases like 'treating the whole person'. Such statements beg the question by instantiating the understanding of a whole person when in fact there is no such clear concept.

² Though in writing this I am aware many might not agree and point towards more natural living without technology etc as a healthier way of being. My rejoinder to this is largely that people who still have a 'natural way of living' enforced upon them would very happily swap it for western luxury and that people who return to it voluntarily are often financially able to do so. These adventures constitute a bourgeois symptom and not a viable exit route for the mass populous.

grounding to it. I don't say it's impossible, immediately if I think of TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) I have an example that partially escape this. I say it escapes it because it takes its grounding from a theory that is kind of sealed off from scientific interference (but only kind of).

So what's a theory of talking about everything as an amorphous region of stuff that we lay words over to communicate the roles they play for us, got to do with any of this? Well at this juncture we need to take a detour: the key to working our way into this is precisely the experience of yourself or of your treating someone in which they respond to a treatment of the aforementioned nature (evidence base nil) in a startling way e.g. homeopathy. I am aware that that's upsetting for the homeopaths but I'm not here to pick on them any more than anyone else. From a scientific perspective though, for homeopaths the verdict is largely in, and no study as yet that hasn't had substantial methodological criticism has been found to back up homeopathic claims for effectivity. What I want to try to do here though is listen to that voice of actual experience of e.g. homeopathy or any other 'strange' treatment where it seems to have worked. 'Seems to' again sounds insulting (to these practitioners), but it's not meant to, it is intended to grant that *appearance* of effectivity obtained, whilst necessarily bracketing off the whether or not that there really was a connection. We know the mind has an incredible power for sticking phenomena together in a way that creates this kind of connection –this sticking together power is part of the whole discussion.

What we have to introduce is scepticism not just for homeopathy but also for the claim that negates it. The system (whatever system) that fails to show up in tests is either just not doing what it says it will do (it's rubbish) or there is something else going on there that won't show up in the tests. Therapies outside of conventional scientific medicine sometimes obtain results that *feel* strange/powerful. The strangeness comes in part from the level of effectivity (a strong and sudden recovery/improvement e.g.) and the way in which we are maybe subconsciously attuned for them *not* to work –so there is an uncanniness about the seeming effect. Whatever such an experience is, it can impress both upon the practitioner and the patient the profound sense of certainty that a therapeutic intervention *was* made. It is this point of apparent intervention that forms schisms within the how-we-take-things-to-be. Powerful results leave powerful impressions. A largely all-encompassing rational-materialist way of taking things to be has us in its default grip. The experience of its being broken is always understood *in some way*. This again is different across different treatments though there will be a shared base of greater or lesser rupture. There is a set of explanations that can be employed to comprehend these phenomena:

- 1) Placebo from treatment (independent from practitioner)
- 2) Placebo magnified by charismatic practitioner
- 3) Actual reason unknown by science and difficult to reproduce (like herbal synergy/unknown energetics)

- 4) Actual physical reason unknown by science but potentially perfectly reproducible³.
- 5) Coincidence
- 6) Informational Interference

I would argue that these constitute the basic modes of understanding for such phenomenon. The problem with them is, we really have very little grounds to be able to choose between them as explanations. That sounds outrageous because of course most of us will think that we have very good scientific reasons for choosing one of the first two of maybe the fifth. There *are* such reasons of course but what we have to appreciate is that our own predispositions will tend to suggest to us which one these we think appropriate/most likely. Hence though it is likely many will be comfortable with a scientific hegemony supplying the likely truth of the matter, persons/practitioners well-disposed towards/invested in such practices may consider explanations 3 or 4 as preferable.

The common rationalist will likely say that powerful responses to herbal medicine can quite reasonably be attributed to phytochemical effects not properly understood or a placebo (an explanation straddling 1, 2, 3, 4 and potentially 5). However an effective response to flower essences would seem (to the rationalist) to appeal to only explanations 1,2 or 5, as indeed would homeopathy. Acupuncture from a TCM perspective is a peculiar one insofar as it asks us to accept the existence of a series of energy lines (meridians) throughout the body that have various organ harmonies. It often comes as a surprise to people that acupuncture doesn't really have a scientific backing but sadly this is the case. The conflation is between transcutaneous electrical stimulation and acupuncture as TCM. The former is a method that may involve needles that does indeed sometimes treat chronic pain effectively (in the scientific eye), whereas the latter is the aforementioned manipulation of chi in its various bodily manifestations. We can concede here that maybe there is something imperfect in our 5 options insofar as a TCM advocate might argue that 4 and 5 are applicable as explanations insofar as the mechanism is as yet elusive to science. However as science cannot yet even detect any success at all we feel it must also be classed under explanations 1,2,5.

So explanations for seemingly anomalously effective treatments are sucked into the canon of science either by psychological dismissal, coincidence or unknown mode of action. The problem with this, is that if the practitioners accept this they must either accept a degree of guess work in what they do (to guess the correct synergy of herbs e.g.) or they must accept that all of their practice is just a kind of ritual through which they enact the placebo effect –not a happy thought for many.

³ I can see there is little between 3 and 4 but I want to maintain the distinction for the possibility of metaphysical notions that might be eventually considered real in themselves and unknown physical reasons that though unknown are perfectly comfortable in the contemporary framework.

How to escape this conclusion and where do you have to go to if you do refuse it? A common notion appears at this juncture to solve the complementary therapist's problem. This is the notion of intuition. The above paragraph stated that the practitioner is forced into the position in which the synergetic mixture of herbs must be guessed. This is *perhaps* unnecessarily harsh. It is not guesswork per se. The putative actions of the herbs are taken into account when formulating the mixture, this much is not in dispute. But that the herbalist *knows* the herbal synergy of the mixture (if indeed this is a factor), this is the contention. The reply to this then, might be that it is the herbalist's *intuition* that will determine the mixture/quantities that in turn produce the unique effect. Bringing intuition here might mean two things. It might mean a default description for unconscious processes that are presupposed to be determining the choices (why this nervine than another) or it might mean an active sense of inner knowing sometimes described as bodily knowing/beyond conceptual knowing/gut feeling. Intuition senses that fit this description are not what the issue that can be argued with (without doubt people experience this), what can be argued with is whether or not these states actually are epistemically reliable. The situation falls into a similar pattern as the anomalous treatments. We might testify to a number of instances in which intuition (for want of a better word) seemed to have supplied information that was rationally unavailable that proved to be true. Here we're into a different (though clearly related) problem that we can only treat lightly. The scientific community is somewhat divided on the evidence for potentially psychic like effects that might back up intuition like happenings, largely however they are against this possibility. Psi like effects, in fact don't have such a bad press as complementary medicine, the lack of serious attention to them is presumably just due to the serious difficulty in reproducing any useful potential out of them that is not just a small statistical significance. We can do a similar sketch of the possibilities of intuition.

- 1) Subconscious expertise
- 2) Stage magic like mind reading
- 3) Coincidence
- 4) An unknown ability to know things not rationally knowable.

This list isn't identical to the anomalous healing list, but there is something similar. There are three options that are acceptable to the rationalist view and one that is not. There seems to be some evidence that 4 might actually obtain, though psi evidence is far from clear and intuition is not the same as telepathy. Intuition of how to formulate the correct medicine does not involve reading another mind but rather processing what course of action will be most efficacious at healing the patient. Subconscious expertise is of course completely reasonable yet doesn't help the claim in the case of herbal medicine where there is no knowledge base to tell you the 'real' mixture of herbs. Hence the intuition claim there can only mean 4. Whilst there maybe some evidence that 4 obtains in the literature, as noted this is not a phenomena that can be repeated with any useful regularity – minor statistical significance is not on demand psi even if that did entail reading medicinal

approaches and not minds. In this sense intuition fits into the puzzle as one more anomalous strand that also –in some interpretations– requires features of reality so far, largely outside of a (useful) evidence based model. One could consider intuition with regards to a variety of therapies, however it gets its greatest force in conjunction at least with a therapy that might exert a measurable effect (like herbal medicine). The other remedies lack of evidence base means that the consideration of intuition would seem to be done to determine which placebo one should choose over another.

What's Left for Complementary Therapy.

Here we want to understand what practitioners might mean when they want to continue to say that their method/treatment is actually effective –given that they are not able to (or at least scarcely) substantiate it through regular (rationalist) channels. It seems to me the options left open to them are as follows.

- 1) Actual reason scientifically acceptable, but difficult to reproduce (like herbal synergy).
- 2) Energetics.
- 3) Actual physical reason unknown by science but perfectly reproducible if known.
- 4) Informational interaction

Let's consider these. (1) Is, as discussed, applicable for some therapies, though these therapies have a foothold in the science–evidence based world. The best example of this is herbal medicine, largely because some of the remedies have demonstrable effects and the notion of synergetic effects in mixtures is perfectly reasonable (it happens in regular drugs where they are sometimes called interactions). It is not acceptable as a potential reason for any of the treatments that have no evidence base at all. As noted, if the effectivity of the treatment is only found at the patient–practitioner experience and refuses to show up in RCTs then we have to cross this one off. (2) Refers to systems that postulate fine energies that can be manipulated for healing results, acupuncture, reiki, orgone therapy being examples. These systems are often culturally distinct which makes their suggestion of being ‘objective’ energy body components difficult to accept. That is, some systems have more energy centres than others, colour ascriptions, emotional attributions all frequently differ too. This all makes for a muddled picture of the ‘energy body’. What's more none of these have reproducible results. The described energy systems involved remain postulated, though of course science perfectly accepts bio–electricity. It is the reproducible effectiveness of the ‘energy’ manipulation of this that remains at issue. (3) Seems a possibility, except it entails a contradiction. given that the very problem is that the results are unreproducible. A generous reading of it must entail that there is an explanation over and above placebo that occurs in the patient–practitioner situation under certain circumstances that resist current attempts at reproduction. I believe this leads us to the nebulous but inevitable (4).

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying (4) *is* the answer but I am suggesting something like the following is what (in many cases) the practitioner of anomalous therapies is committed to subscribe to if they decline to accept the totalising scientific ontology. What does (4) say? It says that it is possible that information can effect in a very real manner the underlying *vector* to which it is attached. And so back to the start, what is a vector? Well you can think of a vector as an object, except that strictly speaking 'object' itself is a concept attached to a vector. For this reason we speak of the vector field as an undifferentiated mass, the ability of this mass to be treated as separate bits facilitates our term object, here to emphasise that blankness of stuff we can consider it as follows.

Vector field

Vectors regions

Objects

Names of objects (telephone etc).

In ordinary discourse we don't think that the idea of what a thing *is* (its concept) in any way altering the substance it names. However in some aspects of the systems of anomalous healing this is pretty much exactly what we are asked to believe. The best example of this is of course homeopathy.

Homeopathy represents the perfect example of informational interaction. The notion expressly made by the homeopath is explicitly that it is the *information* and not the materiality of the substance (vector) that brings about the result. The claim of homeopathy then is that information interacts with the vector i.e. that information is not an inert layer on 'reality' but rather information is capable of being imprinted into alien vectors. In homeopathy the process of succussion is supposed to drive the information into the water (the alien vector) so that it is there retained in various levels of 'potency'. We might note that this potency notion is also an informational imprint into the vector—the *idea* how greater power. Homeopathy helps us to demonstrate a kind a distinction in the ways in which the information is imprinted. In homeopathy there is supposed to be a real action in the original vector-concept harmony. Whatever ill effect (note that this effect is now autonomous from the substance) an excess of the substance brings about, a tiny amount can cure—this is the notion of proving the remedy (e.g. too much chamomile makes for twitchiness but a much lower dose is calming). If we allow that the proving concerns an actual effect from the substance involved then the original information came from a reproducible physical effect (generously). Using the logic that the smaller the quantity the more 'potent' the healing ability to counter the effects of excess of the substance, the information of this 'real effect' is then, by the succussion process, imprinted upon a different substance (water). The idea of homeopathy involves the application of the information of the actual effect applied to a substance that would not house this information of this effect usually. The difference I wanted to point out is between this kind of imprint and that for instance of

signatures⁴ in plants. In signatures the imprint information comes from the sensory experience of the perceiving the plant without ingesting it (even conceptually). This is opposed to imprints that are extracted from effects that come from a physical effect of the plant upon the organism –e.g. by ingesting it. Note that a vector like water could take both a signature or a physical imprint (in the theory) as they are both information. However in the case of the signature the imprint is just as importantly imprinted back onto the plant-vector itself. That is, because in the case of the signature there may well be nothing in the plant that correlates to the signature (and of course a plant could be perceived as having various signatures from different interpreters) if the plant is to have the healing property of the signature the information must be imprinted back into the plant from the sensory suggestion.

Of course intuition raises its head here again, as there may be some instances where signatures point to properties that turn out to be real (the claim being that the person has intuited the remedy through the signature; the signature in this sense is not arbitrary but rather a guiding sign). Where a signature has proved correct, historical verification of which way round the discovery occurred is likely to be difficult. Enthusiasts of this kind of theory may like to say that it was intuition that guided the analogy like perception of the plant that revealed the healing property. This is one explanation. Coincidence is another, another still is that there was an awareness of the healing property in circulation prior to the signature, hence the signature is just a convenient fit to an already understood remedy. The cases of harmony of treatment and signature aside, there are enough instances of plants with healing-signature attributions that have no justification in the evidence base. We might say there is subtle detection of plant constituents at subconscious level which translates into a conscious image. This kind of model places it within something fairly rational. It still however ends up requiring something more like ‘spooky’ intuition as it is one thing to be able to subconsciously detect plant constituents but quite another to know what their action will be. If though we remove the intuition sense from the picture then. However without an intuition like sense we must accept that the attributions of information onto plants are arbitrary (insofar as the appearance seems to have no necessary relation to healing property). If though we believe the projected analogy is effective and remove the intuition notion then once again we have the informational interaction vector notion.

What I’m driving at is that it makes more sense (weird as it is) to think of the signatures as basically just made up, though admittedly based on some actual characteristic of the vector⁵. What the

⁴ A signature is a sensory impression from a plant that infers its healing potential. E.g. heart shaped leaves, blood coloured berries, roots that break through stones (kidney stones) etc.

⁵ This doesn’t even deny that you can get signatures that are so strong they look *real*. A plant that looks like a human head might endlessly attract the idea that it can treat something related to heads. Does the plant really have anything to do with heads? Well without an extremely anthropocentric world the headness and any potential benefit for heads is likely to be coincidental. The informational imprint theory adds to this by saying

interference part asks us to believe is *that the information in some sense doubles back upon the vector*: It means that simply and insanely put, when you intend this property of the vector even though rationally it may have nothing to do with it, that property goes into the vector. Let's not forget where we are. This is the consequence of *rejecting* the evidence base, this isn't an argument about how reality is really, this is just where you end up if think anomalous healing events have existence outside of conventional rationality –accepting also synergetic non-understood physical effects.

So the claim, my claim, is that if we don't think anomalous healings are rationally explainable (as either not really caused by the putative agent (placebo/statistical occurrence) or synergetic (remembering that synergy also entails intuition or disintegrates into guesswork and intuition also potentially requires spooky reality –the intuition of the herbalist is a tricky one) then we are stuck with either energetic models that contradict each other and thus make problematic their epistemic status *or* these kinds of we have the possibility that information imprinted into vectors (plants, water, whatever) that do not naturally house them and that under the right conditions this information can either alter then vector or be transmitted by it.

So how is this working? Obviously this is a fascinating question and one you really can't answer. Indeed I consider theory to have gone awry as soon as it lays down a 'how' that it cannot test. What we have to keep our eye on in discussing this possibility is that –to reiterate– this is the weird remainder when you don't want to believe it's just placebo and nonsense. Keeping our eye on this caveat maybe it will help if we look at examples again.

Let's look at the case of acupuncture in the strong TCM sense in which the meridians really are tied to organ sympathies. Evidence in regular science for meridian existence is scant. There was the peri-neural network theory that didn't seem to come to anything, and more recently there's been the Korean research suggesting a prim-vascular structure that might demonstrate physiological differences between acupuncture and non-acupuncture points. All the papers seem to be in TCM related journals which, whilst it doesn't discredit it per se, does suggest the possibility of bias. It would certainly be nice to see wider replication in more mainstream scientific forums. However even if you did discover something that resembled the meridian system in a reproducible manner you still wouldn't have succeeded in showing that those lines really are attached to the organ/body

there is going to be kind of feedback loop formed by all the beings that can perceive the 'headness' of the plant in which this information is fed back into the vector. In this case because the signature is so strong the informational imprint is going to be well embedded in it and if there *was* anything to this kind of notion, who knows what that might start doing to the genetic structure of the plant over time? This kind of argument blurs the notion of 'what belongs to the vector' somewhat, but only for the kinds of being susceptible to the relevant perception. Of course in most cases signatures are not so unambiguous and indeed we could see many more in various plants if we looked for them.

systems they claim to be. Indeed we already have evidence that this isn't the case since acupuncture (except as TENS) doesn't seem to show up as effective in RCTs.

The case of acupuncture is an especially interesting one since it seems the notion of actual lines of energy is not even in the original TCM form but was rather pasted onto it by the sinophile De Morant around the turn of the 19th century. De Morant supposedly completely misinterpreted a rigorous Chinese understand of blood movement, combined it with the acupuncture points to draw a series of lines throughout the body that he called meridians. The notion of chi as energy is largely erroneous as it was interpreted through the hypothesis of its similarity to the ayurvedic prana, which *is* a vitalist kind of concept. Of course nowadays it is almost impossible for us to escape using chi to mean vital energy, this *is* its western meaning. The suggestion of the location of the acupuncture points is sometimes that they tie to high concentrations of lymph ducts, blood vessels and nerves; the way they have been joined together by de Morant seems potentially arbitrary (or maybe *intuitive*). If this is correct the whole meridian system *is* an informational imprint both as to the nature of what is circulating and the structure (the lines themselves). Of course vitalist theories do exist and maybe there is vitalism in TCM, this isn't a scholarly work on that topic and it doesn't need to be. Vitalism can speculatively emerge in a variety of ways. General observations of the flows in nature (rivers/winds) paste this idea onto the body. Transcendental arguments like 'there must be something that makes things alive' easily proliferate to generate the need for a 'life energy' like concept.

If the informational imprint/information theory holds, 'life energy' as projected onto various phenomena to a greater or lesser degree, is not just not just a historical inaccuracy, it becomes an incoherently active informational life energy and it has become so *just because we have developed this interpretation*. The meridian energy theory then is forged of the same effect (it's like projecting a signature onto a plant). It matters not one jot that de Morant botched the interpretation, for in doing so he brought into being a whole energetic system for the body into existence. The information about the meridians and the organ sympathies just stuck together in the regions we call people's minds and became effective in certain conditions. Does that sound utter nonsense? It does, we must absolutely concede this. It is however what I believe we're left given that the organ sympathies meridian theory has no evidence base to support it. It sounds bad but what sounds worse is trying to cling to theories of 'energetic' objectivity that contradict each other and that don't show up in RCTs. All the organ sympathies and specific functions of certain acupuncture points are all contingent (could be otherwise) features that sometimes genuinely function but only by virtue of the informational overlay influencing the underling vector.

Flower essences along with homeopathy make an ideal example for this kind of notion. Dr. Bach (latterly expanded by others) made various attributions of emotional healing properties to a variety of plants/trees. Some of these are signature based, some of them via a direct spiritual perception (intuition). We don't need to deny Dr. Bach his spiritual

perception it is more to the point to deny that it might give any actual knowledge and not just a powerful projection onto the vector. What we have to remember is that revelations have no guarantee of truth-hood. Just look at religion. Look at the nonsense spirits will spout out (Keel notes this in his 8th Tower). The mendacious or at the least contentious nature of what the other world/subconscious will tell you is well attested to. These insights though, these contingent insights have taken on a life of their own. People believe they belong to the plant itself. Of course it is *possible* that they do but given again they don't really work in any RCT setting it puts the objectivity of these claims under strain. It makes the situation (if you want to cling to any remnant of this occult world) more reasonable that the concepts are imprinted upon them than that they belong to them. You might say 'but what does reason matter when we have already lost it?' But the answer is precisely that if we really feel there is something more to the situation than the scientific model will allow, it doesn't mean that what remains is allowed to fall into absolute gibberish. We are looking at the remains *after* the empirical-scientific explanation is rejected. We must remember as well that flower essences do not contain any remnant of the actual plant but are information only as remedies so already the medicine means we must take informational imprint into account. After this we need to accept the truth of the remedies from plant many of which are based in notions like signature which then is either projection or intuition. Of course you cannot rule out the intuition communication thing but it is a big ask when, as noted there isn't even any plant in the remedy. So it's kind of a weird mix for intuition to be real to determine the plant-as-remedy as then you still need the informational imprint to explain why the remedy works. When someone like Bach draws our attention to some plants with a certain reputation behind him we might find we pay a kind of attention to what he's told us about the attributes. So then those signatures are highlighted and the remedy paid attention to we reinforce the imprint and allow the possibility of effectivity. To reiterate though unless we believe he really intuited the 'truth' of those plants, what we have is a contingent informational imprint that now functions ineffably and erratically suggesting a kind of truth to the claim of attribution. But really whilst attribution is the correct word, it is in the sense of contingent attribution emanating from the interpreter rather than reading a necessary attribution contained in the vector.

The case of homeopathy is very similar to this except that the effects of the medicine are often taken to have come from real effects rather than signature like interpretations. In this sense, in some homeopathic instances there is a harmony between the physical actions that come from the vector-remedy and the information attributed to it. That being said, there is still little or no vector left. Only an informational imprint which we are told was imprinted by a special method succussion. Even if you accept that what do you suppose the science is like behind succussion as a method for imprinting information hmmm? This question raises

one of the last issues that we're going to suggest about this most unsatisfying of solutions. Given that no one really knows whether succussion really imprints information into a vector or not it seems fair to say that the succussion too is informationally imprinted. The idea that the harsh bang knocks the information into the water has a kind of logic to it which some of use might accept. This acceptance is 'that act' (the vector) being imprinted with the ability to imprint information into water. That is, the act itself is a vector imbued with the nature of being able to achieve the imprinting process (it's like a part of a spell). Now if by this time anyone can spot the similarity with any of this and magic then I think you're pretty much on the money here. Succussion is a *ritual* which imprints information into a vector that does not normally take it. This gives us as good a definition of magic as you are likely to come across. 'Magic is the attempt to put an idea into a vector which does not naturally house it.' For example, in a love spell the situation is that he or she does not love the protagonist. The spell is designed to put the concept of he/she loving the protagonist onto the vector in which it is not naturally occurring (the situation between them). Here we're not dealing with anything that sounds so directly sorceress but the situation is essentially the same. The difference is it's all dressed up to make it look not quite so much like magic (which doesn't have a good press). So succussion is somehow a legitimate technique and no sir, not a mini intentional ritual at all. The attribution of a bunch of invisible energy lines (that didn't even exist in the original system) to certain organs/emotions etc. is just science that hasn't been discovered and not the imposing of a magical system of attributions upon the body. And the attribution of a set of very specific emotional resonances are powers that belong to the spiritual power of the plant and certainly not anthropocentrically imposed informational overlays.

You can disagree with this and try to maintain the reality of the metaphysical system of your choice but frankly given the disagreement amongst the systems and their sheer failure to work under scientific settings your back is really against the wall. The best (and as I said possibly most satisfying and infuriating) thing to do is (if you want to maintain they really are doing something) to accept that these are informational contingent overlays that can actually produce remarkable results. Yes there is a blurred crossover between (especially in the herbal case and no doubt in other physical therapies too) effects that belong to the vector and effects that come from the imprint. However this doesn't detract from the fact the imprints are still being used. The scientific model of the moment says the informational imprint is epiphenomenal, it's not doing anything. The experience of many practitioners is rooted in the fact that it *is* doing something, their problem is that they don't know it's just an informational imprint, they think homeopathy etc. is real but just yet un-proved. So each system *is* real insofar as it is kind of psychic construct that actually does things, but not real

as a medicine that will operate on a physical level devoid (as best we are able) of psychic interference (something that passes an RCT)

Is this bolt hole something one can take seriously? This is an impossible question to some extent. Again to reiterate, I believe though if you don't want the placebo type explanation this is the kind of retreat you have to make. One might take some kind of solace from the fact that of course with regard to many living organisms informational imprints *do* function. They function particularly well with humans by the well-known trope of people becoming what you tell them they are. This kind of notion occurs in the human psyche a lot, either by people believing cruel labels or identifying with the opposite of labels (amongst others). Such questions raise deep issues about the nature of any self-type notion but we don't need to consider here, all we note here is that in psychology the cogence of an informational imprint having an actual effect is already established. Of course anyone can spot the problem with this, the analogy is false. An inanimate object and a human are not the same. What the analogy does though is let us know that in reality this kind of effect *does* occur in some vectors. The weird extra part that the scientific rejection picture suggests is that it occurs in all vectors to some extent. In normal life we just apply the regular ideas/words to the vectors that everyone mutually understands the meaning of. In this theory, in that moment when you mistook the cushion for a cat for just a second, the catness went (albeit briefly) into the cushion. The informational imprint therapies just use this feature of existence in different intensities to procure results that look anomalous.

Of course all of this is ignoring a massive issue. Even if this imprintation theory were correct it still doesn't solve why they don't show up in RCTs? Well let's remember the obvious answer again. *Because they don't really work.* Bracketing that aside and persisting with the vector-imprint theory we might note that there is in fact a decent enough inference to be made. The claim is that that informational overlays are acting somehow as a conduit for the healing property in question. The RCT is by its nature there to rule out any placebo like effects, to extract only a physical effect that will occur regardless of who administered the medicine –this is the kind of magic it performs. It follows reasonably that this itself is an informational interference that would likely render inert any informational overlay. The informational overlay is exactly the equivalent of a 'fine matter' from an energy system, indeed it would be so fine it would have literally no physical component. If the theory were true it would only be the overlay of information that is sustaining the vector in looking like it's doing the work, but of course the vector is actually not the natural home of this concept and thus under the strict conditions of science the informational overlay is just wiped off. This would neatly explain why in the patient practitioner bubble the effects look remarkable and *maybe* is remarkable and yet cannot be

transferred to the RCT setting without the effect being wiped out. The suggestion is literally that, if you reject the science what you're left with is that reality can be shifted at a local level by informational imprints, that will not transfer in to RCT success. Furthermore once the complementary therapists argument is couched in terms of informational interaction, the argument for parity between the positions is clearer. The powerful impression of the anomalous healing might be due to the informational imprint or placebo/coincidence. It looks like placebo/coincidence has the advantage except that anomalous healing is evidence for the informational imprint as much as the other (because it doesn't expect to show up in RCTs). Placebo/coincidence can only demonstrate its correctness by appealing to the definite claim that it already knows what reality is like. But the status of reality is exactly what the anomaly calls into question. The anomaly as 'spookiness' explanation just needs to be as theoretically coherent as the placebo/coincidence idea. Informational imprintation ticks these boxes.

Chaos Magic As Conclusion.

So the explanation is infuriating and satisfying to all parties. Skeptics can take heart that such therapists are pushed into admitting they are essentially practicing a kind of magic but be annoyed that it isn't actually saying the magic explanation is necessarily wrong. Practitioners (some therapies aside) can take heart in the fact that there is an explanation for their therapies not showing up in RCTs when it seems in practice they are working, but similarly be annoyed that the actual practice itself could in some sense be any ritualized therapy with a back story.

Magic under the heading *chaos magic* has for some time encompassed the kinds of notions implied in this paper. Inaugurated by figures like Austin Osman Spare, Peter Carroll and Robert Anton Wilson, the notion that magical systems are effective (real) but belief contingent, is well known. What I've done here is just to tease out the chaos magical implications inherent in the complementary medicine landscape. Contradictory energy models, informational attributes and failure show up in scientific testing all point to magic being the only retreat. The difference is that these practices aren't commonly performed in a chaos magical way (active belief under control (Castaneda's controlled folly)). The practitioner is taught a system the acceptance of which functions as the ritualized framework for effectivity which hypnotizes the practitioner into believing in the real reality of the system. This feeling of the real reality of the system is what generates the belief that the science will vindicate the system. This however isn't happening. We have reasonable tests and they have been applied to a number of complementary practices and the results aren't in favor of the practices. This means either the practice is bunk or there is a factor

that means it only shows up out of testable sight. Since the occult systems cannot agree amongst themselves as to the nature of the hidden world I suggest they are largely projected psychic accretions of information. It is these accretions as directed by practitioner patient complicity that (if any effect is happening) are responsible for the effects.

What about serious illness? Few complementary therapists would eschew their role as *complementary* in the case of many truly life altering/threatening conditions. It would be foolhardy for both patient and practitioner to do this with the possible exception of last resort situations. Is this problematic for the magical explanation? One might say that if the magical situation were really that strong an argument practitioners might feel comfortable in taking on seriously ill patients exclusively. No one could seriously claim that any form of complementary medicine has an effective treatment record against serious pathology e.g. cancer, either historically or contemporaneously. Anomalous healings for such conditions do occur and often no one is any the wiser afterwards. Even if informational interference occurred in the patient-practitioner-complicity-bubble no one is saying that the vectors themselves cannot override informational overlays, indeed that would be the more normal situation. Given the power of such physical pathologies and the general notion (not an unreasonable one) that regular medicine is better equipped to deal with a number of these pathologies than any other therapy, this information should serve as a self-regulating fear against the hubris of such practices. The specter raised here is that of the notion of the power of the mind and all the subsequent guilt type notions implicit in it. If belief type structures *can* cure ailments, what happens when they fail? Did we not believe hard enough? These are questions we cannot answer and they do arise as part of the consequence of anyone trying to fathom magical processes. In certain circumstances they are relatively harmless and indeed in the state of the naïve belief in whatever system, the answer is there already: the result occurred because the system is 'real'. In the historical situation that we find ourselves in we can be sure that for all parties, when it comes to serious pathologies the notion of complementarity should be acknowledged –the power base is with scientific medicine, remember this would be true if magic obtained as well. This leaves open the door for anomalous healing potentially brought about by informational interference whilst simultaneously removing guilt from practitioners and patients who might feel anxiety that actually conventional options would be the most efficacious.

Potentially the best way to look at this for both complementary and regular medical staff would in fact be to incorporate the possibility of informational interference into practice. This claim is made on the back of a Pascal's wager type notion. The French mathematician's wager was essentially that by believing in God he lost nothing and potentially gained everything. The analogy here is that the active belief of the specificity of a remedy for a

patient is potentially an integral part of its healing potential. Confidence in the practitioner as the conduit of healing force and that medicine as healing power can only be positive, it's not going to detract from a placebo and it might enhance the effect of an already effective vector. By making patients have some degree of faith in the medicine you don't lose anything (outlandish claims notwithstanding) but by handing it out as a substance disconnected from the practitioner and only capable of functioning by virtue of its objective properties you remove the outside chance of the informational imprint (which costs you nothing).