

Is it possible?

A deeper look at potentiation

by Mark Moodie



When BD growers stir the field preparations it has often been called potentiation or dynamisation¹ in common with the terminology of homeopathic pharmacists. A pinhead of crushed silica is not going to have a chemical effect on a hectare of land whether or not it has spent some time in a horn so clearly, as with homeopathic remedies, we are making use of a 'dynamic' effect. Even before the Agriculture course was given, Dr Steiner worked at the research institute with Lily Kolisko, Ehrenreid Pfeiffer and Guenther Wachsmuth with both homeopathic potentiation and the biodynamic preparations.

It's daunting to try to understand what is going on when one dynamises a preparation. Now, in large part due to the recent work of Glen Atkinson and Enzo Nastati, there is renewed interest in non-traditional-BD forms of dynamisation. I have gleaned a few ideas that I collated and shared at a recent meeting, attempting to integrate clues from orthodox science, Dr Steiner, Samuel Hahnemann and these modern pioneers. In particular Enzo Nastati has written 'Foundations For a Development of Potentisation²', from which many of the ideas in this essay are inspired or lifted. If you would prefer to bypass the monkey and get to the organ-grinder it is to this publication that I direct you.

Despite the difficulty I think it is a worthwhile

to consider these ideas because we may learn something to enable us to increase our options or dynamise the preparations better, and thus to improve our land. Even so, because it necessarily takes us so far from the modern story of what is real as defined by materialistic science, it is with trepidation that I put these ideas down for wider public consumption...

IS EFFECTIVE DYNAMISATION CONCEIVABLE?

Conceptual objections are frequently raised to such practices from orthodox circles. The most usual is that there is such a small amount of the original material in the final liquid that it cannot conceivably be effective. Allied is the concern that without absolute sterility what remains of the active ingredient will be swamped by other impurities in the solution or on the sides of the glassware. And finally, if the remedy is delivered over, say, a cattle grid it will be shaken again and so will be at a different potency when it arrives at its destination. These are all clear objections that must be addressed or ceded to.

Actually I would cede: dynamizing is foolhardy, madness, unmitigated stupidity - if the materialistic point-centred model of reality is true, all the truth, and nothing but the truth. Therefore, for those of us who think that it may not be madness, we have to the challenge that mainstream model. Let us start by gathering some ideas. ▶

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RHYTHMICAL OR RANDOM?

Homeopathic remedies are made in differing ways by differing pharmacies. Some follow the original advice of Samuel Hahnemann: the test tube or bottle is repeatedly thumped down against a book or other firm but flexible surface. This is called succussion. In other pharmacies the bottle is held against a mechanically vibrated pole to induce the shaking. The Weledan Steiner-influenced style of potentisation involves manual shaking of the liquid in a steady pulse for a given duration. We might ask ourselves if and why the rhythm, rate and duration are relevant.

DURATION AND FREQUENCY

We can approach an answer to that question with evidence from the biodynamic field-sprays, horn-manure/500 and horn-silica/501. Readers will know that these are stirred for an hour before being sprayed over the fields. Thorough mixing is assured well before an hour of stirring is complete. From a time-and-motion point of view it makes no sense to waste perhaps 59 minutes stirring the field preps.

Weleda shake their bottles for 2.5 minutes for a plant-based remedy, 4 minutes for mineral remedies. Simply thinking mathematically we can compare this 2.5 minutes and the 1 hour of BD preparations. Consider an old-fashioned clock with hands instead of a digital readout. 2.5 minutes is one 24th of an hour or of one complete cycle of the big-hand or hour-hand. One hour is one 24th of a day, one complete apparent cycle of the Sun. What is so special

about a 24th? Actually that's an open question because it's not exactly the answer that I would like: it is half of a 12th which would better fit my thesis and the 12-hour clock. A twelfth corresponds to one equal-sign zodiac division which we inherited, with the clock, from the Babylonians and whoever inspired those early star-gazers. Pending input from SnF readers to clarify why we don't stir for 5 minutes or 2 hours we will claim it as an unambiguous suggestion of a connection with the heavens. The clock illustrated is from St Mark's square in Venice, Italy. Here the suggestion is even stronger as the Sun and Moon stroke the heavens to keep Venetians on track.

At Weleda the remedy is shaken 60 times per minute for those 2.5 minutes. This again coincides with the clock maker's art. Whatever it was that the Babylonians saw in the sexagesimal system is what Dr Steiner has implicitly suggested for both the pharmacy and the farm for dynamisation of remedies and preparations.

Although not so obviously in harmony with clocks, Dr Steiner often described another rhythm that we might consider. When he talked about the platonic year he showed that the equinox Sunrise, through the precession of the equinoxes, moves through the 360 degrees of the zodiac at 72 years per degree. He connected this to the 72 heartbeats per minute of the adult human. This was used in many later lectures to demonstrate the correspondence of the macrocosm and microcosm.





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THE EMERGING THESIS

A thesis is emerging so let's make it explicit. Dynamizing is not just a way of dispersing an active ingredient within a liquid, or indeed it would be 59 minutes wasted. It is not trying to work with the only conceivable power the point-centred or materialistic worldview can imagine of a substance. On the contrary, one is trying to relate to the peripheral, centripetal or universal forces as one stirs and potentises³. One could say that one is trying to avoid 'grinding the gears' or to resonate with the celestial mechanics that mark the powers with which the potentised preparations work.

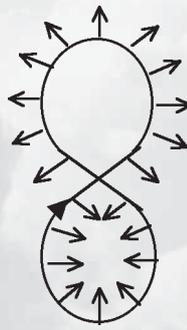
If this unorthodox thesis is right, the discipline of making remedies and preparations is to discover and then work in harmony with the laws of the heavens. Logically it would make sense to clarify what those laws are and experiment to find the best ways to achieve resonance with just those cosmic or inflowing forces which one wishes to harness in ones remedies and preparations. The Babylonians and Dr Steiner have given us one system. Let us study more characteristics of the heavens with which we might align ourselves as we shake, rattle and spray.

ORIENTATION

If we continue to take guidance from Dr Steiner's work we might prick up our ears at the information that Weleda do not make preparations between 11 am and 1 pm – the period in which the Sun crosses its zenith. One can surmise from this that the rising and the descending of the Sun can

be used to enhance (or diminish?) the efficacy of a remedy. Indeed BD growers do the same in that 500 is typically made and applied in the evening to harmonise with the forces in the soil, and 501 is typically applied early in the morning to resonate with the Sun's movement towards the zenith. This can be emphasised simply by facing the rising Sun when making cosmic preparations, and the setting Sun for those which are earthly.

Sunrise and sunset are relatively parochial affairs of the rotation of the Earth in relation to our local star. We can also look further afield as directed by another of Dr Steiner's clues. He said, rather enigmatically, that the medicines of the future would be created using the axis of Pisces-Virgo. Indeed when Enzo Nastati's team make their 'homeodynamic'⁴ preparations this is exactly what they do. For instance, for one purpose, the horns of 500 are laid with their tips pointing to one or other of these constellations as these horns are laid in the soil⁵. This fine-tuning requires an awareness of the constellations' position as one is busy with the tasks of making the preparations. Dynamizing is also undertaken when facing the signs in question as one stirs or shakes the bottles. ('Facing' is really an indication of ones consciousness which is the important aspect.) As the day gets older potentisers and those laying down horns reorient themselves to remain aligned with the progressing constellation. This is an example of taking our guidance from those stars that are more distant than the Sun. ▶



There is another gesture or form that connects light and darkness – the lemniscus. Imagine a birdseye view of about twenty people each holding a candle in their right hand. All these people follow each other along the same large figure-of-eight on the ground, making sure they don't collide at the cross-over or 'waist' of the eight. If one has this inner movie running one will picture the two lobes of the figure of eight, one with the candles on the inside and the other with the candles sticking out into the surroundings. This is an image of light and darkness – the latter being more than the absence of the former.

This figure of eight or lemniscus is another form or gesture with which Enzo potentises. Note that choices are presented: the pathway around the lemniscus can be followed one way or the other. He suggests that the one route can be used to bring in or incarnate a process and is appropriate when potentizing something like horn-manure, whilst the other is exarnating as would be appropriate when potentizing ashes for the deterrence of pests. One can also make one lobe larger and the other smaller and this is used, for example, to bring nerve-sense qualities into metabolic processes when the latter are too dominant. Mechanically there is no difference between these options but I trust it is clear that the mechanical rules are not those that guide this art.

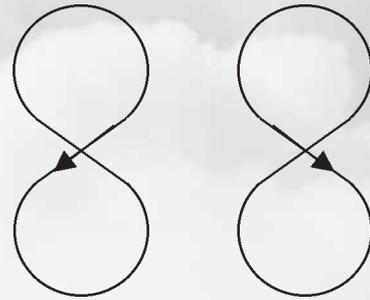
GESTURE

Having suggested the frequency and duration of shaking, and the orientation in time and space of those making preparations and remedies, we can go on to consider the question of the way in which one actually succusses – the movement, choreography, or gesture one makes when shaking the remedy.

Hahnemann used a flask containing the water and mother substance and repeatedly banged it down onto a 'leather-bound book'. That all sounds eminently practical for a scholarly pioneer trying a few things in his library or laboratory. But is it just convenience or was there more to it than this?

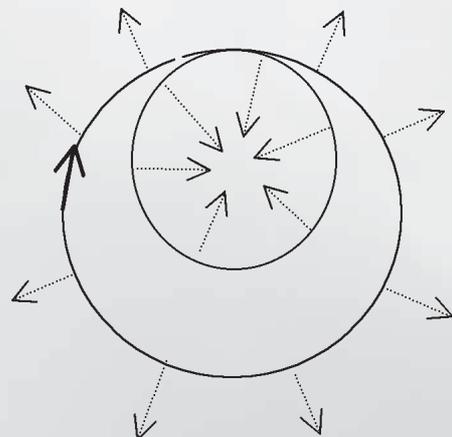
Anthroposophists may be familiar with Dr Steiner's assertion that the material world has come about as a kind of precipitation from non-material activities. 'Esoteric Science: an Outline' maps this process from the start, and lecture cycles such as 'The World of the Senses and the World of the Spirit' give more details of the formation of matter in particular. This fallout from life processes (and indeed from other greater processes) has produced the material world around us. Steiner called matter 'shattered form', or 'a heap of ruins of the spirit', a relative darkness. Spatially this is manifest as the light from the periphery and the darkness in material centres, archetypically manifest in daylight surrounding the dark Earth.

Enzo asserts that this is acknowledged when Hahnemann repeatedly lifts the flask up to the light and brings it down to the darkness – thud. The gesture of Hahnemann repeats and thus resonates with the fall into matter. The step-wise dilution of potentisation introduces an exarnating process into this dynamic – reversing the materialisation. It is Enzo's assertion that Hahnemann was a gifted Rosicrucian who would have been fully aware of this understanding of creation and matter's place within it. In the process of dynamisation one relieves the light of its material burden and thus disenchant the forces which precipitated as matter. It is these imponderables that are the active principal in the medicine or preparation.



Another interesting choice: return to the imagination of the dozen candle-bearers suggested above but now alter the figure of eight. Our dancers continue to create the lobe of the lemniscus in which the candles are on the outside, but as they approach the waist they cross over and now the second lobe is traced within the first. A drawing may help.

Here the light shines in the darkness.⁶ The choice of phrase to describe this is not random and is pursued in Enzo's Commentary on Dr Steiner's Agriculture Course, particularly in meetings 15 (about Koberwitz lecture 4) and 21 (about the 7th lecture). One is also pointed to Enzo's other works to see why he is so keen on this gesture when potentising his homeodynamic remedies and its link to the new etheric circulation of the Earth⁷. It would take us too far from our current theme were we to pursue that here.



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INTERLUDE

I recognise that in this search for precision and efficacy, the deeper one gets into these celestial-dynamics and so the greater the potential for confusion. Therefore, before adding another layer I would like to head off readers' desperation as the mental turbulence kicks in in anticipation of hitting the boggle horizon. My advice is to sit back and relax, skim over if it's getting too involved and convoluted, safe in the knowledge that all this complication and detail is just one way. It can evaporate into a new simplicity which I will attempt at the end of this article. But in the meantime, back to the nitty-gritty.

HANDS OF THE MICROCOSM AND MACROCOSM

In this increasing complexity we have now suggested a new dynamic in which light and darkness and the creation of matter are active players. Light and darkness are here seen as something different from the intensities of certain electromagnetic wavelengths. This latter determination has evolved from the perspective reached by trying to detach the knower from that which is being observed. Modern science has tried to measure everything as an object - or objectively - in the hope of avoiding wish-fulfilment and more subtle aspects of subjectivity. This is all well and good in its place and as long as the limitations are respected. However, in this article we are dealing with a different discipline, but one which I insist is no less scientific. In the discipline of making preparations and remedies there is no attempt to take the person out of the loop of knowledge or action. Indeed the opposite is the case, and I think it is important to embrace this fully and with clarity. These preparations are to be made by human hands, appealing to forces of the macrocosm, aware of ourselves as a microcosm.

This has implications even at the level of the physical body. In many traditions the microcosm or human form is an image of the zodiac. Our feet are Piscean and our head is Arian, and one can map the parts in between in the order in which the constellations appear ⁸. Turning to the macrocosm, our solar system - our local star's neighbourhood - is essentially a disc on a plane that is at an angle to our equally disc-like galaxy which is called the Milky Way. Observed from Earth the Milky Way is as a band of stars which intersects with the zodiac twice. One is between the bull and the twins, and the second is in the constellation of the scorpion. In the human microcosm this corresponds to our shoulders and our hands as our arms hang down. Thus just as our macrocosmic hands are a link to what is beyond the limits of the solar system, so are our physical hands a link beyond our own usual limitations!

The arms and hands are our limbs of freedom. This is corroborated by viewing the human from a threefold perspective as has been done so well in 'Man and Mammal' by Wolfgang Schad. The limbs of the metabolic system are the legs, which are dedicated to our relation to the Earth and gravity. Our nerve-sense limb is our jaw which, among other things forms words to express our creativity. The hands and arms, the limbs of our rhythmic system, are an interesting intermediary in that they are liberated from the task they would fulfil in the case of animals making them available to make effective what we direct them to do out of our creativity. They are almost infinitely flexible and free. They can caress or thump, create or destroy. They are the most obvious physical manifestation of the potential for free human creativity. Used in the appropriate way our arms and hands can link us to the Milky Way and its transcendent possibilities. Whilst many of the possibilities mentioned above - duration, gesture, frequency etc - might conceivably be programmed into a machine, this latter is not feasible.

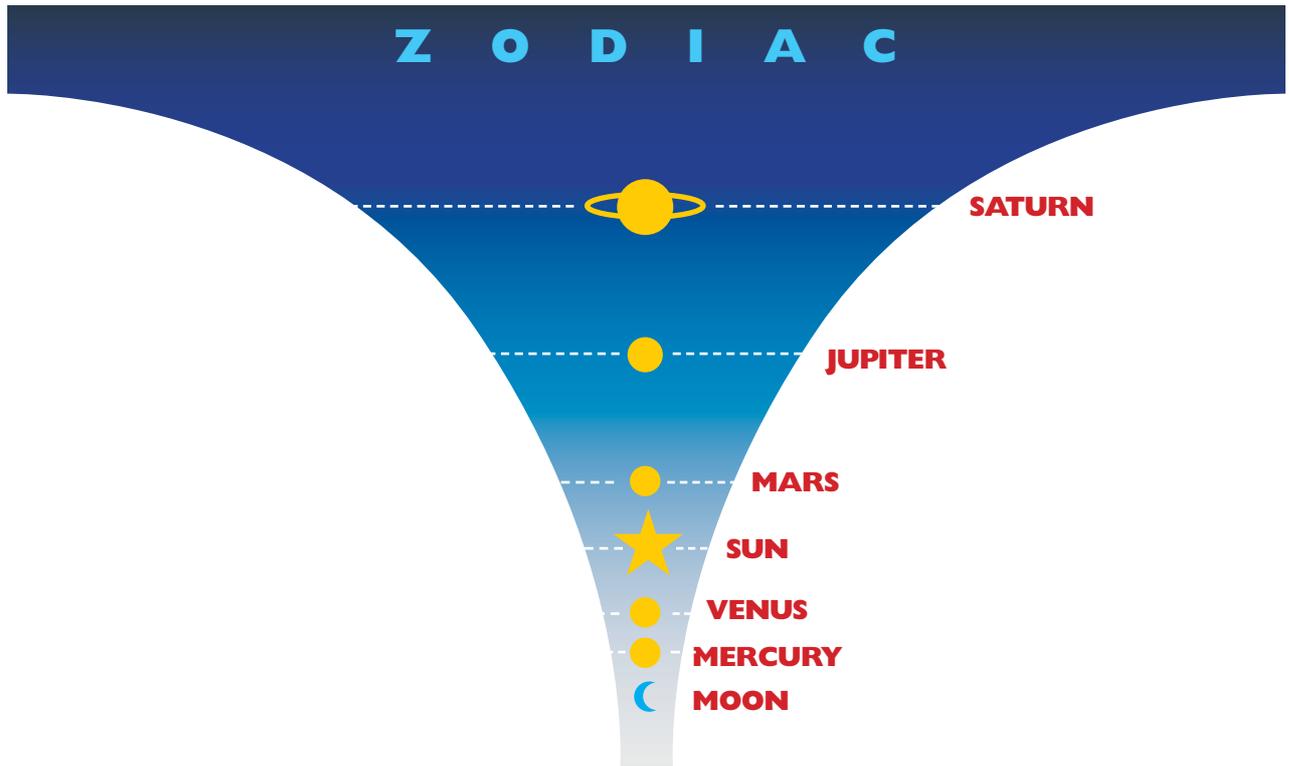
Perhaps, in this rapidly expanding map, this is a good time to get our bearings back from Dr Steiner. He said that what used to be done with alchemy can today be done with homeopathy. If potentising is a form of alchemy then the cardinal rule of alchemy might be expected to carry over - that one cannot transform outside oneself what has not been transformed within oneself. This suggests that not only is the quality of the preparation dependent on being done by hand but also that this in turn depends on the inner work done by the owner of those hands. This is not the science of the detached observer!

HOW HIGH CAN YOU GO?

If we realise the implications of this last point it would seem pertinent to consider the intentions of the pharmacist or farmer involved in the process. What, one wonders, will be the longer term influence of thinking of profit whilst dynamizing as opposed to a calm determination to overcome obstacles to further the evolution of the living kingdoms? Discuss...

We have mentioned relating to the Sun, to the zodiac and now to the Milky Way. If there is interest we can talk about going further! But for now let's consider this as our field of activity. In many places and in many contexts Dr Steiner talks of a progression through the concentric spheres of the solar system. We can glean information about this from his books and lectures on life either side of our incarnated life, and on stages of initiation etc etc. This journey is an archetype that can be applied to all different areas of endeavour. By studying and meditating we can learn who are the guides at the various stages, where there are thresholds and precipices, and what disciplines are required to maintain ones integrity at each level. ▶

Closer to the cultural norms, we can also take our lead from Johannes Kepler and his eponymous laws. In the third of these the distance of the planets from the Earth and the time they take to make a full cycle are found to be law-ful – the cube of the orbit time is proportional to the square of the average distance from the centre. One can make a schema of this with the separation depicted vertically and the orbital time on the horizontal.



This rough sketch shows that the law of the solar system that Kepler deciphered also describes the vortex. From this we might wonder whether when we stir the field preparations we are already putting ourselves in resonance with the laws of the peripheral forces. Then we may rest content to use the vortex for 60 minutes grateful for the authority of Dr Steiner to reassure us of solid practice – but we will not have learned much unless we feel free to play around this orthodoxy. Perhaps we will try other stirring durations based upon this lawfulness in an attempt to be in harmony with one particular rung of the planetary ladder. We may be able to get our bearings by finding out what the usual 60 minutes corresponds to in this point of view?

Well, the 500 and 501 preparations that are stirred for 60 minutes can be seen from (at least) two points of view. One is that 500 is the lunar preparation related to plant vigour, compared to the solar 501 and its quality. In doing so we retain our bearings only when we realise that we are using a two-fold model. In the seven-fold model which encompasses the range of preparations better, both of these field sprays are solar. One can for instance refer to Bernard Lievegoed's submission to the Biodynamic Experimental Circle that was published in 1951 as, "*The Working of the Planets and the Life Processes on Man and Earth.*" Here the two activities of each of the planets are suggested, one primary and the other secondary. These are also discussed in Enzo's '*Commentary*

...' in meeting 5. The incarnating, direct or materialising primary stream (500) and the secondary, indirect or exarnating stream (501) of the Sun are shown.

Be that as it may, the important thing in this instance is that 60 minutes relates to the Sun in Kepler's vortex. Can we extend this thinking to the other planets – in both their primary and secondary action – and learn what lengths of time will bring us to the level of the other planets? If we wanted to bring the preparation to a different level within the planetary system to emphasise a particular quality can this be done by dynamizing for different time periods? The answer Enzo gives is 'yes', and some details of this are given in the appendix to the "*Foundations For A Development of Potentisation*". There he gives full details for making one specific preparation. Those interested to get all the times will have to access more information than I have currently got at my fingertips.

ALCHEMY AND PROTECTION

What protection do we need when working at this level? A waterproof apron and wellies? All right, what I really mean emerges from another way of looking at what is really going on here. We have trashed the western monopoly of materialistic science and postulated another scientific discipline in which making effective preparations can be conceived as possible, and in which we have tried to highlight some of the

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variables with which we may wish to be aligned. But what is the big picture within which we are working if it isn't the soulless and meaningless product of a big bang? Dr Steiner asserted that matter and physical forces – which are the ultimate reality in orthodox science – are the late-comers to the party. The fuller picture is encompassed in the assertion that all we can meet are beings and their interactions. Matter and even forces are results and not causes. A being is a primary reality and not secondary to or an 'emergent property' of their physical body. Your true self is not an 'epiphenomenon' of a complex bio-chemical reaction. Life is not a special case of matter: matter is a special case of life. If we take this on board we can guard against a bastard-hybrid of two conflicting worldviews.

However, assuming this is right, another pitfall becomes clear. If we are turning material science on its head this way then we are consistent if we consider beings as primary reality. (Indeed, if we are consistent, then we have been dealing with nothing else all the time.) Dr Steiner has presented us with many many indications to guide us in the world of beings which are both more and less evolved than ourselves, and – with study – we can align ourselves with those we select in many ways, depending on the disciplines and traditions we trust. For some this means hard contemplative study, whilst for others it is a prayer or invocation. This is a contentious subject I will touch upon at the end but I will press on as if it were a 'given' that we consort with beings when we make the preparations.

The new pitfall is that if we are not conscious of the involvement of beings in this work then we are prone to attracting inappropriate beings with their own agendas which may not be in everyone's true interests. Consciousness seems to be the crucial factor here. This is relevant in a few ways: we might think that we cannot really know exactly what forces we can now trigger with our preparations⁹ due to unclarity in our studies, inner failings, and the impossibility of always working to the ideals we might set ourselves. Sensing this we could be paralysed into inactivity by perceived unworthiness. An alternative is to recognise our deficiencies and send out a request with our best efforts for the collaboration of those beings who can make good these deficiencies.

Enzo has also focussed on this dynamic and considers that Hahnemann's 'leather-bound book' was indeed the Bible because it offers insurance against our deficiencies and protection against regressive agendas. After all it is a book that presents a picture of the fall and possible resurrection of matter and the natural kingdoms.

Dr Steiner's suggests that the fundamental characteristic of prayer is 'thy will be done', and I think this should carry over to potentising work. Actually I really think of it as, 'this is what I've tried to achieve here, but thy wiser will be

done.' This would best be annealed with continual efforts to clarify exactly whose will we invoke.

Steiner also and famously said that the scientist of the future would approach the laboratory bench like a priest approaching the altar. If we 'unpack' that a bit, might it not mean that we come with the best we can offer but with awareness of what we lack and what might be completed by those wiser than ourselves. It is with this attitude that we can fulfil both our own potential and realise its limitations, an appropriate mix of humility and self-empowerment.

SIMPLICITY

Although mentioning the primacy of beings highlights some possible problems, it also offers the chance of simplicity. A being – particularly one more comprehensive than a human – retains discretion to adapt its activity to the details of a given situation in which it is asked to act. If we work with higher beings we send up the intention and leave the details of how and if this might be achieved to a more comprehensive vision. Beings use forces to act upon material things.

Our conventional peers work with material things. We can work with forces – the subject of most of this article. Working directly with beings is reaching as high as we can and Dr Steiner has stated that there are beings who are most eager to be invited to work with us. It is an interesting alternative to all the nitty gritty detail and one which many are exploring.

How does one do this, safely? Well, not surprisingly Enzo offers an answer. The guidance is simple and public. It's right under ones nose. There is no raising of spirits, candles, no dead chickens nailed to anything, no power-tripping intermediaries wailing convoluted incantations in dark incense-filled rooms. The 'white' way is simple, and open to everyone – apparently. One asks and it is given. It's almost too simple to be taken seriously.

OUTRO

This article is way over the editor's request and there are many more aspects which could be covered – dimensions and 'irrational' proportions of the mixing vessels, clues in the Koberwitz course, the synthesis of preparations as opposed to the analysis of pharmacology, radiating and non-radiating preparations, dilution rates, the original materials and bringing out their healing aspect, potencies, regional and universal preparations, thresholds, the path of Raphael and the path of Michael – and much more. (In these uncovered areas we can find answers to the last two mainstream objections mentioned at the start of this article.) However, I think you will either have to request another few articles on what interests you, invite me to supper, or read the publications mentioned in this article. It is time to wrap this one up. ▶

My daughters like to make 'pixie potions' out of soil, petals, coloured chalks and past-their-sell-by bits from the kitchen. I am nervous that what I have proposed here will be seen as something akin and absolutely inappropriate for a sane grown up. However, the attempt is to sharpen the tools we have for a non-polluting agriculture which recognises something beyond matter as real. If our preparations are effective then the materialistic model is not sufficient. And indeed it is this which is the crucial test of our work and our sanity – do they work? The common ground of the competing world views is efficacy. We will know if all the jiggery-pokery suggested above – timing, alignment, attitude etc – is also hocus-pocus by trying it or the results of others' efforts who do try it. I have seen enough now to be persuaded that it is worth trying to clarify what the rules really are.

One story: a farmer rang up to say that his slurry pit had gone clear. He wanted to know where all his nutrients had gone. A litre of Glen Atkinson's potentised E7 had done this overnight to 200,000 litres of cow and pig slurry. How? What is in E7? (Incidentally, the nutrients had stabilised as humus. When sprayed on the field the grass was unburnt and palatable, and the smell when spreading was dramatically better than the experienced farmer's expectations.)

Another story: at a course in January 2008 one of the delegates had a call from the people looking after his farm. A cow had delivered a still-born calf and now had retained the placenta. It was losing condition and smelling from the back end. What to do? Enzo was running the course and, when asked for his opinion, suggested that preparation 502 was stirred for 20 minutes and that the cow should then drink this. After the course the information came back that this had been done and the cow drank the whole bucket, lifted her tail immediately and expelled a gush of hot and foetid liquid. Two days later a healthy looking placenta was delivered by the rallying cow. Why 502? Why 20 minutes only? Discuss (If I hear that anyone's really interested I'll tell you what I think in the next exciting issue of *S&F*.) ■

¹Some clarity in the terminology is useful. Dynamisation is a general term for the process of shaking or stirring a remedy to release latent potential. Potentisation, often used synonymously with dynamization, would better be reserved for the process of repeated dynamizations to increase the potency up a scale. Succussion is a form of dynamization in which the test tube is hit against a surface. Finally, an insoluble material is triturated in a medium like milk sugar in the early stages of its own potentisation.

²available from this article's author

³Also see George Adams', 'Potentisation and the Peripheral Forces in Nature.'

⁴Nastati calls Homeodynamics a 'necessary broadening' of biodynamics for modern conditions such as GM, radioactivity etc. See 'Introduction To The Homeodynamic Method Of Agriculture.'

⁵See also meeting 14 of Nastati's, "Commentary on Dr Steiner's Agriculture Course"

⁶Another pioneer with preparations, Hugo Erbe, thought that meditation on the prologue to St John's gospel was appropriate for this work – see 'Hugo Erbe's New Biodynamic Preparations'.

⁷ See for instance, 'The Etheric Cycle of the Earth' and 'From the healing of Raphael to the healing of Michael' by Enzo Nastati.

⁸For more detail see for instance 'Spiritual Astronomy', Enzo Nastati – in translation.

⁹ Particularly if we are able to dynamise so as to be able to work with forces of the Milky Way and beyond, we are working beyond the limits of our untransformed ego. The same is the case for Hahnemann's LM potencies.



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