

A Response to Jakob  
on the philosophical foundations  
of the scientific healing arts

While quantum physics may be a “bridge” for people who reflexively assume that the mechanistic physical sciences that form the conceptual basis for modern medicine provide the only legitimate way to understand the nature of health and disease. Quantum physics can be valuable in opening their minds, because it is a well recognized science that demonstrates quite clearly that mechanistic models of the “physical” world are not complete.

However, quantum physics is only a bridge; it is NOT the other side of the bridge. That is, in exploring the wonders and mysteries of healing, I believe we need to search beyond a “better physical model” of human life (e.g. functional medicine, etc.)

I have no doubt that the physical models alluded to by Jacob, Mayo, and MANY others in the “holistic health” field are FAR superior to the usual allopathic model, yet their attempt to be honest and careful in their explorations still lead them operate largely through a physical perspective. Quantum theory becomes an inspiring and important example of the limitations of mechanistic scientific models, even while most people interested in “holistic health” are involved in developing better physical models.

Many consider the idea that *matter expresses consciousness* an important implication of quantum physics; that it does not simply follow “physical” laws, but follows intention. Okay, so in the field of medicine, we need to develop (or I believe *learn*) a science of individual life that contains spirit from the outset, rather than trying to find ways to bring it back in.

While Jakob indicated that he heard me say that spirit is somehow above the body (was he implying “more important?”), I’d rather say that physical and spiritual aspects of life are intimately interconnected, interdependent and mutually causal. [In classical Chinese medicine *jing*-essence (by which we mean *physicality*) contains an individuated spirit, and spirit animates *jing*-essence.]

There is, of course, general interest in the “spirit” in holistic health circles, such as the relaxation response, the detrimental (biochemical/endocrine/neurotransmitter) effects of stress, etc., and the validity of spiritual aspects of life are generally measured against physical markers. There is not a generally recognized “science” (that is, systematic study) of the spirit, so most people that want to be responsible in the field of holistic medicine must resort to improving the physical conceptual frameworks of physiology, et. al. in various ways, including adding in the importance of “mind, body, spirit” connections.

Classical Chinese medicine to be an amazingly rich *science* of human experience. It can offer contemporary people much wisdom concerning the nature and process of healing in general, and individuals substantial focus and facilitation of their healing processes.

I’ve believe classical Chinese medicine is *more* scientific than allopathic medicine, because it begins by accepting some basic truths about human life, rather that immediately reducing the scope of its investigation to the study of a (very) complex biochemical machine. People interested in holistic health, who follow modern scientific thought as a “touchstone,” are always trying to find evidence of the importance of spirit, emotions and human consciousness, rather

than simply starting from the position that they are intrinsic to any study of individual human life in health and disease, and thus central to healing work.

Classical Chinese medicine is a very rich systematic study of human life as an experiential process in health and disease. It includes many concepts, ideas, and theories to help individuals discriminate the nature of individual disease process, rather than simply classifying its manifestations. I consider it a science, although it operates as a science in very different ways from modern science:

1. CCM is a very rich and systematic study of human life, though it is based in philosophy rather than physical sciences (like chemistry, biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, neurology, endocrinology, etc.). CCM is a *science* based in a Humanity, precisely because the object of its investigation is individual human life!

Make no mistake -- all explorations into the nature of reality are based on philosophical assumptions; CCM simply does it explicitly and openly. Chinese medicine is a LIVING science, as we continue to challenge any (or all) of those assumptions. Yet, I've found that once we study the relatively small number of assumptions that provide the conceptual basis of CCM, it demonstrates considerable cogency and reasonableness.

On the other hand, all modern science (including medical science) is based in *naïve realism*, which is essentially the philosophical assumption that our (modern) naïve perceptions of physical reality are correct. Of course, since the invention of the microscope "naïve perception" has been enhanced by a burgeoning array of technologies, yet scientific perceptuion remains *naïve* in its purely *physical* focus. The startling conclusion of quantum physics is that careful study of the implications of that assumption **prove that it isn't true.**

While we can use the assumptions of *naïve realism* as an approximation in many contexts, such as building bridges and rockets, the results of many experiments in quantum physics remind us that mechanistic approach is not true. The assumptions of *naïve realism* are particularly limited regarding the study of individual life in health and disease, because we each have consciousness that clearly and obviously affects physical aspects of our lives.

So, what is the motivation for so many people enrolling so vigorously in that assumption? I believe we begin responding to this vital question by recognizing that there is an aspect of the individual's being that *wants to believe* in the assumptions of *naïve realism*; it is the portion that tries to be in control of one's own life and learns to manipulate the world to fulfill the individual's needs and desires. I refer to that aspect of an individual's life as the "personality," while the embodied spirit knows that the assumptions of *naïve realism* are not true. They are only an approximation that treat phenomena as physical, which is a remarkably poor assumption relative to human health.

2. CCM explores the nature of human life as an experiential process from "first principles." That study yields a lot of theories, though they are descriptive theories rather than predictive ones. Each individual operates both within the general framework of individual human life, and according to the peculiar dictates of their *individual* embodied spirit.

I'd be pleased to share more about the details of any (or many) of those rich theories, but that was clearly beyond the scope of last night's meeting and also the short Symposium we're preparing for March 19.

For instance, one of my big interests in Chinese medicine revolves around one of the key ways in which modern TCM is "physical" in its focus. It is a clinical system of classifying symptoms and signs as the *manifestations* of pathology. Modern TCM is based on one system of channels (meridians), which manages and regulates moment-to-moment life process (physiology). Yet, in CCM that is only one of five equally important systems of channels -- it is a very intricate system!

1. Some find the descriptive (rather than prescriptive and predictive) nature of CCM theories disconcerting. They think they want clear answers, even if "clarity" and the ability to site "proofs," statistics, and predictions comes at the expense of focusing on the specifically optimizing the individual's intrinsic capacity to heal.
2. CCM theories cannot be tested in the usual sense, and practicing CCM relies far more than the usual scientific approaches to medicine on the ability of the individual to discern the nature of a particular person's struggles with and for life. Yet, they also allow practitioners to differentiate an individual's specific challenges, and find ways to support and facilitate his or her intrinsic attempts to preserve life, rather than simply controlling the *expression* of pathology and supporting them more generically to heal.
3. While it doesn't "obey laws" as in physical science, the embodied spirit is ruled by certain principles -- to stay alive (unless it specifically chooses to go as in SIDS), to experience interactions with the world, and to express itself (which it will generally do covertly even when it doesn't overtly, which explains why long term spouses often know people better than they know themselves).

For instance, the embodied spirit exhibits a hierarchy of reactions to some "external pathogenic factors (EPF's, specifically *xiefeng* or "perverse wind")," which include many microbes, but are not limited to them. Indeed, *xiefeng* (perverse wind) includes any "external" influences that individuals encounter, which tend to distract some of its attention from supporting its vital process, or distorting that process in any way.

The "highest" response to *xiefeng* (perverse wind) is for the embodied spirit to simply profuse them out of its body, as it profuses vital process toward the exterior in sustaining life.

The next response to *xiefeng* (perverse wind) that the embodied spirit hasn't been able to simply profuse away, is to gather up its capacities (somewhat like a capacitor stores charge) and expel the *xiefeng* (perverse wind) to the exterior.

If the embodied spirit can't release or expel *xiefeng* (perverse wind), then it attempt to block their penetration. These blocks themselves follow a progression, as the *xiefeng* (perverse wind) penetrates from the exterior toward the interior.

When the embodied spirit allows *xiefeng* (perverse wind) to penetrate to the interior, it becomes part of the individual's process of generating *qi* -- the ability to conduct vital process. At this point, the embodied spirit chooses to "turn down" its *qi* generating capacity to slow down the pathogenic process.

While slowing down the process of generating qi, the pathogenic factors that have penetrated to the interior eventually confront the individual's "source yang," which is the source of *activation* for its vital process.

After beginning to compromise source yang, the *xiefeng* (perverse wind) continues to accumulate, until it either creates roots of tumors and other physical lesions throughout the body that physically impede "normal" life process, or are distributed out to the vital organs to create blockages in them specifically.

6. In addition to *xiefeng* (perverse wind), the embodied spirit reacts other EPF's and "internal pathogenic factors (IPF's)," which are considered *any* unresolved emotional conflicts. Releasing IPF's from one's conscious awareness is so vital (in order to engage "new" experience) individuals are provided with two ways to do so:

- releasing them to the exterior -- so they're gone from one's life
- releasing them to the interior, where they are embedded in "physical" humors (like blood, fluids, etc.) that accumulate in "dormancy" until the individual can no longer do while also sustaining vital function without being impeded in any apparent way.

Even though I could continue this overview for pages, I'll stop and return to one last comment concerning our conversation a couple weeks ago about why people crave various foods, particularly Jakob's comment that it's often based on a deficiency from foods previously eaten. While I agreed with that as a proximal cause for such aberrant cravings, in our society where any food is available to most (and "healthier" ones are often less expensive than others that are less "healthy"), that focus begs the question of why the person made those choices at previous meals. I continue to maintain that how an individual eats over time embodies a strategy of how that person reflects his or her emotional blockages and imbalances through somatic expression.

Of course, in our media dominated world, we may often need to start by educating people to pay attention to the vital needs of their embodied spirits (in choosing foods and other inputs), rather than simply indulging their immediate desires. Indeed, I consider the subversion of our prime responsibility to support our vitality at the root of most pathologies. So, people can often enhance their healing by committing their *willingness* to pay attention to supporting the needs of their embodied spirits, rather than simply using their lives to express the *willfulness* of their personalities.