

Karl W. Kratky
Complementary Medicine Systems: Comparison and Integration
 New York, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2008, 297 pp.

TOWARDS THE THEORY OF HEALTH IN CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE

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In his “Brief Description” of the book entitled “Complementary Medicine Systems: Comparison and Integration” (p.273), Karl W. Kratky says that although a considerable amount of relevant literature is available, the confusion concerning the subject matter of health and illness still seems to grow. A critical moment is that alternate positions find themselves either ignored or opposed. Trying to change this unfavorable situation, Karl W. Kratky chose a different path and carried out the investigation which deals not only with the potentiality of communication among the various disciplines but also considers four basic views or perspectives as interpretations of reality.

Having realized a profound analytical endeavor, the author succeeds in the book to advance and substantiate his original Integralist approach which likewise includes the conceptual constructions in the form of illustrated results (as health disk and life spiral). In general, this is a great success of the scholar (Karl W. Kratky) that he could (primarily, through the profound analysis and thorough comparison) win the goal of achieving the level of Integration of Western (orthodox medicine and homoeopathy) and Eastern (Indian and Tibetan, and Chinese medicine) systems of knowledge. Karl W. Kratky also notes that, in this process, “surprising parallels” emerged, and, above all, assertions concerning fundamental reactions of the human organism.

A great achievement of the whole endeavor is that the author’s successfully established scholarly results prove and start the transition of insights and findings from one medicine system to another. This likewise means the utilization of the knowledge of one mode of healing on other therapeutic systems (as now a possible endeavor); and also creates the groundwork for translating discoveries in one medical system to another (which makes utilizing them possible).

Naturally, these breakthrough perspectives are essentially interesting to the health professionals who are interested in an overview; also to those who are interested in basic questions and interlinked knowledge, especially in the area of medicine; and to those specialists who are dissatisfied with the current divisions and specializations (‘expert knowledge’).

The first thing that attracts attention while reading a book is a large number of notions and concepts under study (including the key concepts for ongoing conceptual constructions), which reflect the intrinsic (immanent) causal factors (which practically are not allowed nowadays for the modern “scientific method” and mainstream scholarly endeavors). Quite literally, the main concepts, notions, terms of the book (that are under processing) substantially refer to the *immanent* causality.

These are the key concepts “Self-Organization”, “Cycles of Life”, “The Basic Circle”, “Life Spiral”, “Fluctuations”, “Dynamics”, “Biofeedback”, “Human Constitution”, “Chronomedicine”, etc. This is likewise a clear distinction (in Chapter 3) of “one-way thinking” from the exploration of cycles and *feedback loops*, or distinction between “linear relationships” and *non-linear relationships*.

A special moment is that the book applies the exploration of the forms of complementary medicine that are the whole medical systems¹ (i.e. autonomic in their organization), and whose basic principles and aetiological and methodological constructions are “diametrically opposite” to the basics of modern Western conventional medicine. In fact, this is a great endeavor to study the specific notions (of Organicist and naturalist essence) within the systems of Homoeopathy, Ayurveda, and TCM (like *miasms*, *doshas*, *meridians*, *yin and yang* bipolarity, etc.); as well as the other Organicist fundamentals like “four humors and temperaments”; or the applied research approaches that focus on the methods and notions of “considering the organism”, “the feedback loop”, “the symbiotic approach”, etc. Moreover, in the structure and contents of the book we meet such unique (for the modern scientific practice) general issues for analytical study as “The Three Regulatory Principles of Ayurveda and Tibetan Medicine”, “Understanding between Ages and Cultures”, “The Roots of Traditional Chinese Medicine”, “Unity in Diversity”, etc.

The author creates and introduces into the field under study his own essential constructs and conceptual approaches – aiming at the integration of medical systems and creating “a complete picture” (a great task!) of active at present complementary medicine systems. Basically (among the author’s original conceptual constructs) this is the notion of “flora” which is introduced as the 6th element – an extension of the Chinese elements. Eventually, in realizing new integrating approaches – this is the author’s advanced “Cross-Cultural Model”.

All these notions and concepts (under study) and the applied approaches (mathematical and cybernetic are of special significance among them), and the achieved results (including the conceptions that are substantiated and advanced by the author), they all, in their rational expression – do substantially oppose the currently dominant modern (super)system of scientific knowledge that is based on the Dualist world outlook and which applies the methodology of mathematical physicalism (called the “scientific method”). In contradistinction, the “immanent causes” (which are under study in this book) directly relate to the opposite great (super)system of knowledge, created by Aristotle, which is the type of scientific Functionalist Organicism. At present, however, the dominating (or, rather dictating) “scientific method” (based on Dualism and Anthropocentric mathematical physicalism and positivism) has absorbed the scientific method of Aristotle’s Organicism, although the latter is factually the basis and matrix of the entire edifice of modern science.

¹ “Whole medical systems”, which are the complete systems of theory, diagnosis and practice, and that have evolved over time in different cultures and independently of Western (conventional) medicine (primarily, in the work, Ayurvedic medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Homoeopathy are taken into consideration and study).

Herein, we find a clear correspondence with the scope of Biocosmological Association's (BCA) agency. For all intents and purposes, BCA's aims and scope are focused on the exploration of issues (tackling problems, studying the sources) which deal with the substantiation (or merely taking into consideration) of aetiologically immanent (inherent, intrinsic) causes, thus directly rehabilitating (the type) of Aristotle's scientific Organicism in the contemporary scientific world.

Karl W. Kratky begins his book with the statement that "Medicine systems differ in thought, language and world views" (p.5). Further he demonstrates apparently that likewise classical science and more recent developments, like chaos theory, no longer speak the same language. A key and essential moment of Karl W. Kratky's conceptual constructions is the advancement and substantiation of the "four different world views" – "*systematic, systemic, symbolic and symbiotic view*" (p.5). It is the essential moment, as stressed by Karl W. Kratky, that "the *symbiotic* approach is connected with transpersonal and spiritual phenomena and corresponds to a world view that assumes a basic unity in all things" (p.4). Herein, the conclusion of the author is of the great importance: "With that, it diametrically opposes the Western idea of division and specialization." (Ibid.) In actual fact, "diametrical opposition" means the polar spheres of scientific and practical activity – the polar "types of rationality" (T_SCSS¹, or types of cosmology²).

Essentially, contours of the author's triadic (Triadologic) approach can be clearly seen in his work. As it is, we can justly refer Karl W. Kratky's "constructivist / symbolic and logical / systematic" to (Sorokin's) Sensate and (BCA's) AntiKosmist (Dualist, Anthropocentric) pole of scholarly endeavors, while "holistic / symbiotic" that "fits in better with the spiritual realm and traditional societies" – must truly relate (of course, in methodologically more elucidate forms) to Ideational T_SCSS and RealKosmist (Organicist, AnthroKosmist) cosmology. So far, however, it evidently intersects (without a clear differentiation) with the area of "cybernetic / systemic" activities which naturally refer to the realm of Integral(ist) studies and practical activity.

Accordingly, the first main recommendation for the author is to actively take into consideration the Biocosmological Triadologic approach to the development of issues under study³. Especially, this approach could facilitate the clarification and development of (selected by Karl W. Kratky) the "three ways of thinking" (or they may also be termed as 'types of mentality', or 'types of rationality', or 'types of

¹ T_SCSS – abbreviation of the Type of SocioCultural SuperSystem which is the cornerstone notion in Pitirim Sorokin's dynamic cyclic civilizational theory, mainly expressed in his phenomenal "Social and Cultural Dynamics" (1937–1941).

² Three main and autonomic types of cosmologies: two polar – AntiKosmist (Dualist, Anthropocentric and Positivist, which is basically reduced to Platonism), and the opposite RealKosmism (Hylomorphist, AnthroCosmist and Organicist, which is basically reduced to Aristotelism); and the intermediate Integralist (AKosmist) realm which has its own (Transcendent, Ideal) cosmological foundations, but uses for scholarly and practical activities the means equally from both poles.

³ To the point, favorably, Prof. Karl W. Kratky already actively cooperates with the BCA.

sociocultural supersystems', as it is in Pitirim Sorokin's dynamic cyclic civilizational theory, or 'types of cosmologies' (in BCA's approach). In this, according to Biocosmological Triadology – primarily two poles should be clearly discerned, together with the third (intermediate) Integralist realm:

1. The pole which is driven chiefly by *outer* stimuli (causes);
2. The other (opposite) pole that is chiefly driven by *inner* stimuli (causes);
3. The Integralist (basal, axial) sphere which equally uses the means from both (polar) types of causality, but is organized on its own cosmological foundations.

Evidently, in all cases, without a deep comparative study and analysis of the different realms of scholarly (medical) activity – we certainly will not be able to enter and build the true sphere of Integralism in contemporary science and cultural practice. Just by following this natural way (we can say that although spontaneously and implicitly applied, but which is similar to the Biocosmological Triadologic approach and its potentials), Karl W. Kratky arrives at the Integralist conceptualizing and successfully advances his own (truly in accordance with the natural Organicist laws) Integralist approach.

In the result, the second part of his book is mainly devoted and contains predominantly the conceptual constructions of Integralist essence. It has the general (sub)title "Integration into a Complete Picture", and includes the tasks (and sections) for "Anthroposophical Considerations", "Cross-Cultural Dynamics", "Bipolar Remedies", "Unity is Diversity: Ethnological and Spiritual Aspects", etc.

Another basic recommendation (in terms of further possible strengthening of the research efforts) can be targeted at the full use of Aristotle's (super)system of knowledge (as the type of scholarly cognition – the Aristotelian scientific Organicism) which is applied at the contemporary level of scientific knowledge (we call this approach at the present time precisely as Biocosmology).

In the beginning, the author states an important idea: "Western orthodox medicine speaks of a systemic phenomenon when an effect is felt in an area of the body different from the origin of the stimulus. In general, interdisciplinary and intercultural approach, systemic as interconnection of parts, and, wherein, linked interactions result in a confusing picture, which is shaped by dynamics, rhythms, cycles and evolution" (p.1). Broadly speaking, the main notions and concepts in the book (as it is stated above) which have the inherent driving causes – these (immanent) rational constructional elements evidently have the direct relation to the type of Aristotle's (and of Biocosmology) supersystem of scientific Organicism.

The latter, in turn, substantially opposes the modern dominant (super)system of knowledge ("scientific method") that is based on cosmological Dualism and which categorically rejects the immanent causality, but strictly implements the methodology of mathematical physicalism. The latter is undoubtedly the essential and highly effective method (which is the basis of modern technological progress). However, as it is clearly seen from the reality of existing medical systems and practices – we actually need various (super)systems of knowledge and scholarly cosmological approaches. However, nowadays (during the last five centuries and present time) Scientism-Positivism has absorbed Organicism and Integralism (thus deleting it from

the area of scientific activity), and this is definitely a disadvantageous trend for the world progress.

In sober fact, in the modern curriculum, we do not meet the true presentation of Aristotle's teaching as the supersystem (cosmology) of scientific Organicism. On the contrary, Aristotle's (Bio)cosmology is dissolved either in Christian theology (Thomism), or the Dualism of Plato and derivative Anthropocentrism of the modern scientific activity, including the conventional "scientific method" as the expression of Dualist and Anthropocentric mathematical physicalism (scientism). Therefore, the majority of modern scholars (and on a subconscious level!) learn false attitudes to Aristotle and accept the existence of only "one method" and "one way" of scientific activity. Notably, Pitirim Sorokin entered the same (wrong) track; in the result he perceived the basic principles of Ideational type of sociocultural supersystems in the form of exclusively spiritual (Transcendent, theological) "ultimate premises", and not assuming the natural (truly Aristotelian) immanent cosmological foundations.

An impression is that the author is also "a prisoner" of the mainstream (false) understanding of Aristotle's scientific heritage. In respect the genius from Stagira, he notes, "since he (Aristotle. – **KSK**.) stressed the importance of observation, he was also an important trailblazer for today's natural science" (p.33). In actual fact, however, Aristotle is the Father of Science, i.e. his (super)system of scientific Organicism lays the foundation and generates matrix for the entire edifice of modern science. We do need nowadays to restore the Aristotelian pole of scientific Organicism as the type of systematically organized knowledge and scholarly approach, which is fully autonomic and essential for the scientific activity (and absolutely equal in its significance to the currently dominating mathematical physicalism).

A crucial moment in the book is that Karl W. Kratky addresses the issue of the "deeper causes of diseases". The latter certainly is not just an acute, but actually a kind of pressing insurmountable problem (rather crisis in medical knowledge). In fact, the contemporary scientific knowledge is faced with the so-called "Global Aetiological Paradox" (Khroutski 2010)¹. It means that despite the success of modern hi-tech mathematical-physicalist medicine in the treatment of acute and management of CNID (chronic non-infectious) and CNTD (chronic non-traumatic) diseases – modern biomedicine is unable to determine the aetio genesis of chronic diseases (CNID and CNTD). Because of this modern medicine cannot develop a healing approach that enables complete recovery of the individual (who is taken ill with chronic disease). This is certainly a human rights abuse. At the same time, as it is well known, chronic diseases (such as cardiovascular, cancers, diabetes, chronic lung diseases, etc.) are the leading causes of death and disability worldwide.

A recommendation is also, therefore (for future research) – to make some steps towards the autonomic (independent of disease concepts) Health theory in

¹ Khroutski, K.S. (2010). All-Embracing (Triune) Medicine of the Individual's Health: A Biocosmological Perspective // Journal of Futures Studies. Volume 14, Number 4. P. 65–84 (accessible at: http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/?page_id=37).

contemporary medicine, which has a deep correlation with the knowledge taken from Alternative medical systems. The point is that we have “complementary” medical system, but likewise “alternative” medical systems like TCM or Ayurveda, or Homoeopathy. Essentially, they are based on their own (but similar) philosophical and methodological foundations that are originated from the exploration of the observable natural laws of the universe (cosmos). In other words, they are primarily Nature-centric (or Cosmos-centric), but not Anthropocentric as modern conventional medicine is. Stated differently, alternative “whole medical systems” categorically are based (in their conceptual construction) on the laws of Nature (or Kosmos, but not space – are Biocosmological in essence), and do not use the man-made laws, which are the product of a human mind, and which cosmologically (on the basis of dualistic attitude to cosmos as the aimless space) stand against the “physical nature”.

At any rate, we must not forget that “whole medical systems” (Ayurveda, TCM, homoeopathy) are basically Nature-centric and Health-centric in their rational construction. In other words, the disease state of a human being is treated as the imbalance of her/his natural constitution and, hence, the healing procedures are aimed at the reestablishment of the immanent constitutional (CosmoBioTypological) balance of the individual. Indeed, basic notions (principles) of the Eastern-alternative medicine firstly refer to nature (cosmos) – natural laws; while the Western-conventional medical theory and practice is based on the laws (conceptual constructions) that were proposed by human mind, and which activity was (is) realized in the Dualistic opposition to the space-nature, i.e. the surrounding physical (objective) world. Naturally, Eastern-alternative medical major aim is the maintenance (or restoration in the case of health disturbances) of the unique essential balance of the individual’s wholeness – the dynamic, but inherent natural (cosmic) integration between her/his inherent mind (soul), body, and environment.

Therefore, a sought-for Health theory in (for) medicine is not a derivative (as usual) of this or that pathological assumption or concept (and thus studying the health in a reverse way, starting from the primary disease), but which has its own cosmological basis, matrix and framework, i.e. its own aetiology, gnoseology, methodology, anthropology, Bio-physics and Bio-metaphysics, its own Naturalist (Cosmist) evolutionary theory, etc.; and which treats the individual as the Cosmist creature who has her/his own specific (inherent) Functionalist mission in the world (Kosmos). Significantly, in this perspective, Karl W. Kratky’s book is certainly an important tool for approaching the aim of creating the cosmologically autonomic theory of Health in contemporary medicine.