

Chemicals are good for you

Henry O'Mad

The chemical industry has been able to make the stunning revelation that everything is made of chemicals! Chemicals are in fact perfectly natural substances and we are fools for worrying about them. Apparently thousands of the so-called 'natural' products of the earth are laced with nasty toxic substances, of which, of course, we were all unaware until this startling discovery was made known to humankind. Somebody better invent a time machine quick, or we're all in trouble unless we can tell our ancestors!

The truth is, though, that we evolved over time (according to latest theory...) to be adapted to certain levels of certain toxins; those that were around when we were. Toxicity is not easily definable anyway — many trace elements are absolutely essential to our life, yet toxic in very slightly higher doses. As with all other attempts we make to categorise everything, our categories are pretty arbitrary if we look closely.

As we evolved along with everything else, we kept in balance or (yes — they hate this word but I'm gonna use it!) harmony with everything else. The word 'harmony' sends many an earth raper into foaming fits. They say that there is no such thing as the 'harmony of nature', but this is because they don't know what harmony is. Any musician can tell you that far from being blissful peace and co-existence, harmony is the product of what we see as conflict. For two notes to exist in harmony they must interact in a way that severely disrupts both of them. The difference between harmony and discordance is that the interactions in harmony produce something coherent, whereas disharmony produces greater degrees of incoherence as it goes further from harmony. What two notes in harmony produce is something else that wasn't present in either originally. This then continues in the same way until one or other changes. The further the notes go from harmony, the weaker their product becomes. If you move one note upwards, say, you will eventually reach a new and

totally different harmony, and half way between the two is a point where the two harmonies are of equal strength (or weakness). Bear with me, this *is* relevant...

Of course it's all a lot more complicated than that (or simpler, depending on how closely you look) but that will do for this purpose. In nature, it is like there are countless billions of notes, and they achieve a kind of harmony. If they didn't, we wouldn't be around long enough to think about it. I don't know how this happens, and I don't want to waste time finding out. All I know is that if you detune an old analog synthesizer a bit (mine had four oscillators, or notes it could produce at once) and leave it humming away for a few minutes, lo and behold, it tunes itself! Also, I read in a whacky book called 'Stalking the Wild Pendulum' by Itzhak Bentov, that if you put a row of clocks on a wall (in theory) with identical pendulums (?) and identical energy input, they would eventually go in synchronicity with each other, even if they started out in different positions.

The point of all this is that if we disrupt the present harmony (which is already changing all the time naturally) by too great a degree, the whole system will shift into a different set of harmonies, which are very unlikely to include us. We ourselves are becoming more and more disharmonic with everything else as each day passes. It's time for a few examples.

Aluminium is present all over the planet. It is highly toxic to much of life. It is present in most soils, but in a form which is not soluble, so it just stays there and does no harm. This is not a co-incidence, probably if this had never been the case over the time of life on earth it would not be toxic to us, it could even have ended up as an essential nutrient, like, say, molybdenum, which is also present in most soil.¹

In our blind stampede towards the abyss of progress, we have seriously affected the distribution of aluminium. This, to go back to the harmony thing, is like altering one of the loudest and most dominant notes in the chord. This isn't a change in the colour of a tree's leaves, or even the extinction of a whole species. There are millions of species and only a few elements, so aluminium is important. We have done this by altering the atmosphere drastically. In just ten years, the Sudbury copper and nickel smelter in Ontario, Canada emitted more sulphur dioxide than all the volcanoes (the main natural source) in the history of the world.² Sulphur dioxide dissolves in rainwater, forming Sulphuric acid. Of course this has been made famous by the mainstream organisations, but they never really pushed the worst of it into the public consciousness. Instead, just like the chemical companies and the advertisers, they chose to treat us like children and tie it all up in a media-friendly parcel. The image most people have when you mention acid rain is a vague

¹ Simpson, Ken: "Soil" — Longman 1983

² Ponting, Clive: "A Green History of the world" — Sinclair Stevenson 1991

impression about trees dying somewhere or other. If I ask people what it has to do with Alzheimer's disease all I get is blank stares.

From the moment aluminium is released from the soil it embarks on a trail of death. It gradually builds up in streams, rivers and lakes. There are currently 20,000 lakes in Finland that are virtually sterile. There are many reasons for this; one of the main ones is that aluminium hydroxide precipitates on the gills of the fish and causes imbalances (disharmonies?) in internal salt levels. Of course the acidity itself is lethal too, even to most microbes.

Aluminium causes Alzheimers disease. Most people know that. Perhaps they were allowed to know that because they would go out and buy more pans. But if they all knew that it was acid rain that was killing granny and their children they might think twice about progress. Even the 'green' organisations don't want to rock the boat too much. First off they would lose their corporate funding or personal donations from big donors, and second, they want to promote electric cars and cfc free fridges and hemp paper and shopping malls built out of stardust (which is recyclable, as every good fairy knows...). Basically they are promoting consumption just like everyone else in business. OK so I admit I've gone off topic there. Please bear in mind I'm not a 'proper' writer. Oh, you noticed already.

So; the other side of this coin, if you remember that far back, was molybdenum, an essential trace element. Just as the acid rain leaches out the aluminium from the soil, making it available to the plants growing there on the way (That was important, I forgot that bit, that's how it kills land based entities such as us.) just as it leaches the aluminium, so too does it remove the molybdenum. Eventually the soil becomes deficient, and this is made apparent to the 'farmer' by a sickness in his crops. If this is diagnosed correctly, the soil is treated to a dose of lime to make it less acid. If it isn't correctly diagnosed (frequently the case in the third world), the chemical companies have a field day! Still, eventually it will be depleted. If there aren't enough nutrients in the soil, there won't be enough in the veg either, even if you buy organic. An exception to this, I believe, is the soil association's organic standard, which is considerably higher than the government's compromise plan. Their farmers have to charge more because of the high cost of monitoring, all in all I reckon this is more important than beer or videos. It's your life, but it's not your planet. Off- topic again, sorry.

It's easy to see symptoms of our own disharmony too. Most of us in the 'rich' world spend inordinate amounts of time wallowing in toxic chemicals. I'm not talking about the all pervasive pollution of land, sea and air here — this is voluntary. Washing up liquid often carries warnings to rinse your hands thoroughly after use. We smear highly corrosive substances all over our cooking and food preparation areas. Foul smelling chemical glop is to be found in most showers. Women are made to feel that they are unattractive unless they smear themselves with hun-

dreds of pounds worth of toxic mineral oil derivatives and byproducts of the meat rendering industry. Then when their skins start to age prematurely they have to buy a different kind of poison. The list is virtually endless.

The reason behind most of this chemical immersion is a pathological fear of nature. Clean kitchens aren't good enough, the germs have only one purpose in life, to *get* you. This is war. Pesticides in the garden, fungicides in the walls and roof timbers, ant sprays, bee sprays, bactericides in the dishwasher, formaldehyde in the baby shampoo (we won't get on to babies here, you wouldn't like it) and chlorine in the drinking water. This is all *deliberate*. Men are rapidly catching up with women on the 'personal hygiene' front, too. Thanks mainly to the glut of drivel that masquerades as men's "lifestyle" magazines. The very bodies we have are not good enough. Hair gel, after shave, deodorant, lipstick, skin colouring... this isn't ceremonial like people used to do, this is neurosis.

We blindly, and without good reason, make drastic changes to the delicate balance that surrounds us. Many 'wise use' advocates and other nutters scoff at this, as I said earlier. They say that the earth's life is incredibly resilient and can take most of what we throw at it. They believe that humans understand the infinitely complex interactions that make up our home, and we can modify it to do a better job. They don't even know what that job is, they seem to assume it is to serve as a playground for God's most important creation — us. But they don't *know* this, they merely assume it, and in their arrogance they fail to notice that the changes we are making are quite literally moving us into a new age. A new set of harmonies that no longer includes us.

This doesn't matter of course, one harmony is as good as any other. But when I look around at what is left of our world, all the plants, minerals and animals, including some humans, when I look at what's good and see what the idiots are doing it's like going to see a really good backing band and then some wanker of a guitarist who hasn't even bothered to tune its guitar properly starts prancing around on the stage grinning at everybody while he drowns the whole thing in sea of musical diarrhoea. And you know what the most annoying thing is? Most of the audience think he's really cool.

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