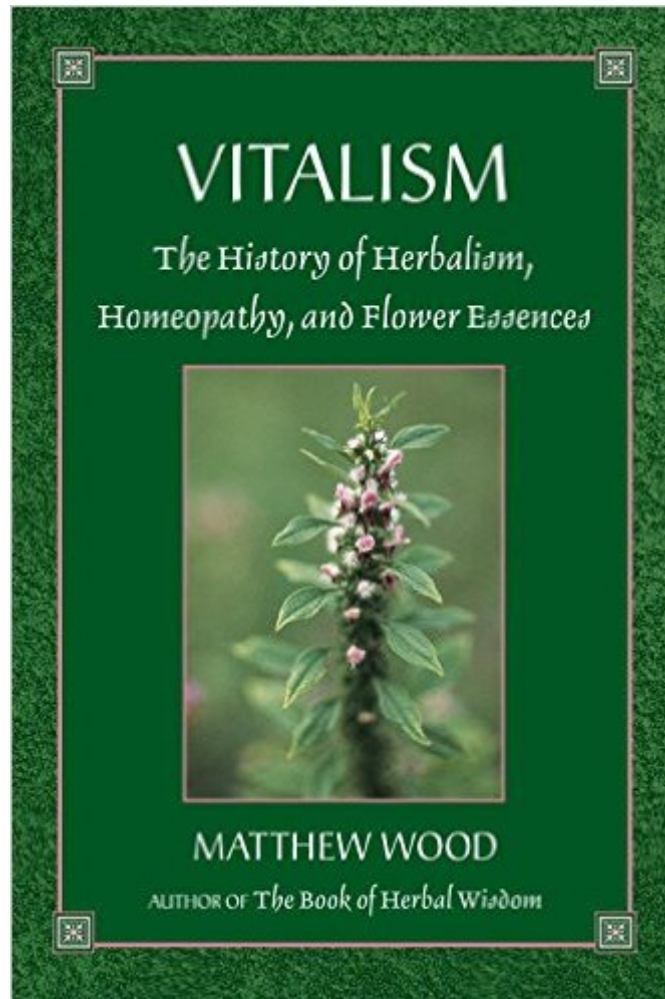


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Vitalism: The History Of Herbalism, Homeopathy, And Flower Essences



Synopsis

Vitalism, the recognition that the physical body is animated by a vital life force, is the foundation of most natural healing therapies. The forefathers of alternative medicine discovered methods of healing the body by stimulating this life force. In *Vitalism: The History of Herbalism, Homeopathy, and Flower Essences*, Matthew Wood describes the theories, lives, and work of nine great physicians who laid the groundwork for natural medicine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Matthew Wood is a practicing herbalist and homeopath; in this book he gives sympathetic treatment of practices he terms "Vitalism" (defined as "the recognition that the physical body is animated by a vital life force"). Homeopathic practitioners are a particular focus of the book. This book provides a general history of herbalism and related practices, focusing primarily on seven figures: Paracelsus, Samuel Hahnemann (the founder of Homeopathy), Johann Gottfried Rademacher, Samuel Thomson (the "root doctor," known as the "father of herbalism"), James Tyler Kent (who developed the "philosophy" behind Homeopathy), James Compton Burnett, and Edward Bach (of "Flower essences" fame). Wood considers the Renaissance alchemist and physician Paracelsus to be the source for the "Law of Similars" principle, usually expressed as "Like treats like." Wood concludes the book with a chapter summarizing the "Vital Doctrines of Vitalist Medicine." This book contains a lot of historical information as well as current comments of relevance to those interested in herbalist and homeopathic methods.

Recommended for anyone who wants to learn more about how the practice of medicine got to be where it is today. Over the past two hundred years, it has not been altogether clear which is mainstream medicine and what is alternative, and this book details how we got here and shows that the current state is due as much to politics as to science. Also, this book is very useful if you wish to know more about the different schools of homeopathy and their rather unintegrated views of best homeopathic prescription practices, such as one high dose vs. multiple low doses. This isn't a book for the lay person learning how to use homeopathy to treat himself and his family. The detailed writing got a bit plodding for me as the author gets into the details of the lives of the great figures of alternative medicine including Hahnemann, Rademacher, Samuel Thomsom, Kent and Bach. Vitalism: The History of Herbalism, Homeopathy, and Flower Essences is an incredibly useful resource for those familiar with the topic who wish to substantially deepen their understanding.

I love this book. It is a history of many healing traditions and should be required reading for mainstream and alternative practitioners alike.

Good review of the alternative medicine practices which evolved at the end of the 18th and start of the 19th centuries and how they have progressed, morphed, and evolved. Some, such as homeopathy, remain fairly true to their originators ideas while others, such as the Thompsonian system, served as progenitors for more developed systems. Any student of medicine, medical (or pharmacy) history would enjoy this book. The author is something of a "true believer", so a grain or two of salt, or calomel, might be in order.

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