

The French Prohibition on Words Related to Healing

by Emma Holister

<http://candida-international.blogspot.com>

Where will the EU directive banning natural remedies and supplements lead us next? Look just across the border to France to get an idea...

On reading the book "Healing, an Illegal Practice" by Sylvie Simon we not only discover the truth about the brutal repression of alternative medicine in France but that the very title of her book itself is causing a scandal. Those in Alternative Medicine in France are faced with the confusing task of having to dance around in a baffling battle of semantics in order to be able to use most natural, traditional, effective remedies. Simon's title is aptly chosen.

In France, merely using certain words pertaining to health matters is against the law. Any therapist claiming the 'therapeutic' or 'medicinal' properties of a natural treatment risks being denounced and dragged before the law courts for 'Illegal Practice of Medicine'. Worse still, they risk being denounced as gurus of dangerous sects. The repression is often both medical and religious in nature.

Practitioners of alternative medicine as well as patients and parents choosing alternative means to treat their children, are pursued, harassed, criminalized and even imprisoned at the whim of the pharmaceutically dominated medical authorities. There have been cases of parents losing custody over their children for child neglect for not complying with the laws on compulsory vaccination of children against diphtheria, tetanus, polio and tuberculosis. Most of which are no longer a threat, thus rendering the vaccinations redundant anyway. A school has the right to refuse access to a child who has not been injected with these dubious and frequently toxic chemicals, products that research is currently revealing to be harmful to the child's health and immune system.

The 'Inquisitors', as Simon calls them, do their utmost to stamp out the population's desire for alternative medicine. The general practitioners who prescribe pharmaceutical products daily may occasionally flaunt an acupuncture needle around as a token gesture to the French medical practice having 'successfully integrated' alternative medicine into its program. However, do not be fooled. By law, no one other than a doctor from the mainstream pharmaceutically oriented schools of medicine is allowed to prescribe, diagnose symptoms, or claim medicinal, therapeutic or healing benefits, for anything other than what is officially permitted by the medical authorities and therefore the pharmaceutical industry.

It is against the law for anyone other than a mainstream doctor to practice acupuncture and homeopathy. A contradiction? The truth of the matter is that the only way to officially see an alternative medicine practitioner is to go to your mainstream doctor, who naturally, more often than not, will prescribe you more antibiotics, synthetic hormones, anti-depressants, whilst claiming that acupuncture and homeopathy are 'very good' but are 'slower and less effective' than allopathic drugs. It is difficult to get through several years of medical school without having been won over by these views. Alternative medicine in France has been hijacked.

What is the result of this on the French language? Some therapists in alternative 'medicine' (don't say that word) have accepted the bitter pill of censorship and optimistically claim to have no problem with this legal obstacle. They argue that it is simply a question of abandoning all vocabulary pertaining to health in order to practice natural 'therapies' (be careful with that word) 'freely' (and that one).

What is more worrying is that the general feeling of aversion towards doctors that is now occurring in this over-prescribed country has led to a predictable prejudice against sensitive words such as 'doctor', 'medical', 'cure'. Sylvie Simon has even been criticized for having used the words 'Healing' and 'Illegal' in her book, pointing out that alternative 'medicine' (don't say that word), does not 'cure' because the patient 'cures' himself, that alternative 'medicine' (or alternative whatsit) is not illegal as long as we don't use the vocabulary of doctors, because

natural therapies have nothing to do with 'medicine', 'doctors' and 'cures', these now being dirty words that the pharmaceutical industry are welcome to keep, we don't want them anyway.

Well, let's see, what does that leave us with in terms of vocabulary?

When the massage therapist Savatofski was pursued by the medical authorities for using the word 'massage' (permission to use this word is only granted to the official 'kinésithérapeutes') the problem was aptly overcome by changing the word 'massage' to 'touching', which so far, is not against the law. So whilst the alternative medicine practitioners jump for joy for having found a way to continue practicing their healing art without more ado, the clients may find themselves in the strange position of having to say 'I'm going to get touched' instead of 'I'm going to have a massage'.

What has the good old-fashioned health-promoting massage been reduced to? Getting touched in a non-therapeutic manner? That does indeed sound vaguely illegal. What does a Chinese Doctor become? A Chinese Thingy? What does Oriental Medicine become? Oriental Stuff? What does Oriental Diagnosis become?

Oriental What-ja-ma-call-it?

France may be the only country in the world to have an official government committee which studies all the new words occurring in French culture and which determines which of those words will be officially allowed or disallowed. So before anyone could confiscate my old dictionary with its old fashioned terms, I got it out sneakily and discovered that nowhere is it stated that these 'medical' words are the exclusive property of the pharmaceutically oriented modern medical world. In fact, looking at my dictionary of word origins, I discovered that these words all have ancient origins in Greek and Sanskrit that trace the entire history of humanity. So in reality these terms, historically speaking, describe what has now ironically come to be known as 'Alternative Medicine'.

Seeing, as our predecessors in all world cultures have always used these words, having always had the right to diagnose disease and prescribe healing remedies, it is difficult to understand why we must suddenly change and only allow the pharmaceutically oriented doctors to use them. Particularly in view of the fact that modern medicine is the leading cause of death in the world, and that is not even taking into account of the deaths caused by this same industry's commerce in pesticides and chemical warfare.

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