

OBITUARY

Alfonso Masi-Elizalde



Dr Alfonso Masi-Elizalde 1932–2003

Dr Alfonso Masi-Elizalde, one of the great names of contemporary homeopathy, passed away on 23 July 2003, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, at the age of 70. His career in homeopathy followed an interesting Unicist genealogy. His father, Jorge Augusto Masi Elizalde, also a homeopath physician, created, together with Pablo Paschero, Carlos Fisch and Armando Grosso, a Kentian group inside the Argentine Homeopathic Medical Association. This subsequently evolved into the Escuela Medica Homeopatica Argentina and in the 1980s, Masi-Elizalde founded, together with his closest associates, the Instituto de Altos Estudios Homeopaticos James Tyler Kent. He also published several articles in the magazine 'Actas del Instituto James T. Kent', as well as celebrated introductions to books such as Gathak's book on miasmas. He was also influential in many congresses and conferences worldwide. Study groups founded, or inspired by him, in several cities in Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland and Spain remain active, generating interest in students and new generations of homeopaths. His supervision of clinical cases enlightened and benefited hundreds of people. He had been writing a book for many years, to which he intended to give the title of 'Confessions of an old Homeopath'.

Elizalde advocated an exegetic review of homeopathic books, and he did this with great vigour. Unable to accept both the organicist and scientificist reductionism and the excesses of a dogmatic Kentism that was unable to evolve, he undertook the task of reviewing the classics and of pointing out the many epistemological gaps in the homeopathic corpus. His intensity and assertive determination in advocating his viewpoints triggered numerous discussions (some of them healthy, others only disproportionate reactions) in the audiences he addressed. However, his provoca-

tions had a specific didactic purpose. After all, he was an expert in maieutics (the Socratic art of teaching students to think), using this technique, he urged students to challenge their teachers.

This active and permanent subversion of the established order ensured him a plentiful supply of enemies. However, this only caused him to continue fighting for a permanent debate. On the other side, he left many friends and students, who saw in these stimuli new prospects for research. According to Elizalde, homeopathy is still in a scientific nursery and its maturity will require the efforts of many generations of homeopaths. As a friend, student and interlocutor of his ideas, my first reaction, when I heard of his death, was to remain silent. The second reaction was to perceive how unfair is the void left by his death. The third reaction was to write as someone who is about to be anaesthetised and does not know if he/she will ever wake up.

Tributes often do not reflect the honoured person's importance. So, allow me a little poetic license: I am not giving homage; I write because I need to. Masi was not only a brilliant homeopath, but a philosopher of health. He recreated the significance of modern homeopathy (and it does not matter who perceived it or not), and with his iconoclastic fury drove thousands of people in Latin America, and other continents. The most striking contrast is to see how an iconoclast of his kind allowed himself to be affected by his associates. Yes, because we took the risk of interpreting: what was he looking for in discussions: critical interlocution, caustic intelligence, the stirring argument. In many situations, we witnessed his admonishing fury; it was not addressed to his adversaries (it only looked as if it was) but against us, who had not reached his critical refinement and his bright spirit, not to speak of his benevolent non-conformism.

It was not difficult to agree with him. However, to discuss with someone of his experience and to disagree with someone with his analytical accuracy was a special privilege. From his philosopher's panoramic view he wanted most to be recognised as an iconoclast. He was one. In his own poetic words: 'our first invention is our own life'. Well done, Masi.

Paulo Rosenbaum
Rua Estado de Israel, 639 - Vila Clementino, 04022-001
São Paulo, SP, Brazil
E-mail: rosenbaum@homeopatia.med.br