



Meeting Around a Fire

Sitting around a fire at the back of our house we were talking about Central Africa. "Did you know that Pygmies hunt in circles", Klaus said while holding the Pygmy axe I had bought in Bangui. Just as one little remark or symptom of a patient can suddenly make everything fall into place, I suddenly saw how the Pygmy hunting technique explained their remarkably small size.

When Pygmy hunters approach a prey in circle formation it is clear why "survival of the smallest" is their variation on Darwin's theory. The best hunters will usually hit the prey, but the bad ones will miss it. Because of the circle, they are likely to hit one of their fellow hunters instead. And which of these have the highest chance of being killed by their less talented tribe members? ... Correct, the tallest.

It can't have taken too many generations to end up with small lousy hunters, and a graveyard full of tall talented ones. Initially they carried game home as well as the corpse of its killer, unfortunately felled by one of his friends. Whether this should be considered an example of "like attracts like" I don't know, but it is clear that owing to the limited skills of the small lousy hunters who survived the hunting parties less and less meat was brought to the huts. This even further reduced the size of the whole tribe.

An additional interesting conclusion is that the technique of hunting in circles must have sprung from the mind of a lousy hunter. Otherwise the genes producing this kind of behaviour would have died out once the last tall hunter didn't make it back to the village on his own feet.

Do homeopaths have anything in common with Pygmies? I'm afraid we do.

We're so keen to be accepted by regular sportsmen that we try to enter their circles in all possible ways. As a result we get "accidentally" shot or are even openly declared to be game and end up in the middle with all weaponry pointing at us. Either we stop letting ourselves be "pygmy-ised" or, if we wish to continue our quest for recognition, we should at least stop letting them choose the weapons that, like fault-finding missiles, easily destroy our research.

Also in our own circles we have a tendency to shoot each other instead of together assuring a great meal for the whole homeopathic tribe. Our tribe even tends to split up into factions that go completely different ways. Drifting away from the tribe, they may lose the wisdom of the ancestors and stop learning from each other because they no longer share stories. Sometimes, accompanied by loud drumming and frightening tattoos, factions have even taken up arms against each other.

An anthropologist observing our tribe might easily conclude that we are a scattered bunch not likely to grow tall enough to fulfil our promise, unless we develop other ways.

In order to "fulfil the highest purpose of our existence" it is essential to sit together and listen to each other's stories. Several parties have gone hunting in different areas using a wide variety of techniques. They all have great stories to tell, as the elders have that stayed in the village and kept the old stories alive. The amazing thing is that despite the great differences it appears they are all still describing the same magnificent prey, albeit from a different angle – as if their expeditions ultimately led them back into a circle they never actually left.

On October 19–21 there will be a great fire in Heidelberg and hundreds of us will take our places around it. We will sit together, staring into the same flames, listening to the many stories that will be shared. For this the circle is the perfect form, because it will allow and stimulate a diversity that will keep our tribe healthy. For hunting I suggest we develop other ways.

I look forward to meeting you around the fire.

Harry van der Zee