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This contribution refers to the article of Daniel Kaiser “Why no one wants to become a homeopath any more” – June 2002.

For the past 25 odd years a stand has been taken within the German-speaking community which assigns a special position to homeopathy against the background of scientific theories. In particular, Will Klunker and Klaus-Henning Gypser, who pay reference to the Hahnemann interpretation made by the philosopher Ekkehard Fräntzki, are of the opinion that curing with certainty is made possible and is predictable based on drug provings on the healthy and the law of similars. This is why so-called *aprioristic homeopathy* is more scientific than conventional medicine. This kind of homeopathy is true, genuine and the only valid form there is.

Arguments put forward by Klunker, Gypser et al. will be mentioned first and then viewed in more depth. This article will close with a plea for limited pluralism as a counter-project to any claim to absoluteness within the fundamental debate on homeopathy. Considering today's standard of knowledge, it is not possible to accept that only one form of homeopathy can exist. On the contrary, there are several forms, yet their sum is not arbitrary. The question as to if a homeopathic method is worthy of being seriously discussed or not, above all depends on whether or not it meets certain prerequisites against the background of medical and scientific theories, amongst which the following are included: intersubjective comprehensibility, the teachability and learnability of a method as well as efforts towards clarity of language.

Matthias Wischner

Homeopathy can a priori not be aprioristic

Plea for limited pluralism

Daniel's highly expressive article is important because it summarizes a standpoint common amongst the German-speaking homeopathic community for more than 25 years. It is a standpoint which allocates an exceptional scientific position to a certain form of homeopathy (to so-called true or genuine homeopathy).

There is a very close connection between what Daniel writes and thoughts coming from Will Klunker, Klaus-Henning Gypser and several others. Their central thesis states that homeopathy alone constitutes today's true scientific drug treatment, i.e. that conventional medicine does not. The article that is referred to as a rule with respect to this, is that of the philosopher Ekkehard Fräntzki and it was published in the “Zeitschrift für Klassische Homöopathie” (a periodical for classical homeopathy, ZKH for short) in 1974/75 and entitled “Die Idee der Wissenschaft bei Samuel Hahnemann” (Hahnemann's idea of science). Since that time Klunker has had several essays with similar contents published in the same periodical and in other places as well. At the annual meeting of the “German central association of homeopathic physicians” (abbreviated DZVHÄ) in Hamburg, Anton Rohrer held a lecture on this subject and even the “Lehrbuch der Homöopathie” (Textbook of Homeopathy) by Thomas Genneper and Andreas Wegener published in 2001 pays reference to Fräntzki and Klunker. Thus, without exception homeopaths of merit are the ones supporting Fräntzki's ideas, which makes them all the more worth considering.

In his article Daniel mentions (as do Klunker, Gypser and others as well) that several forms of homeopathy do exist, yet they cannot exist equally side by side. Furthermore, diverse forms of false homeopathy exist, but there is also homeopathy in its true form. This one form of

genuine homeopathy is homeopathy which is reliable, effective and correct. Genuine homeopathy can be recognized as such by doing a serious in-depth examination of its principles and by using common sense when orientating yourself amongst the mass of opinions supported by conventional medicine. As a result of this earnest examination you have to come to the same conclusions as Daniel, Klunker and Gypser. Otherwise, you would continue swirling around disoriented amongst the various streams and end up falling for false teachings and their faulty hypotheses—today for these, tomorrow for those. Perhaps you would end up turning your back on homeopathy completely due to a lack of knowledge of its true principles and would turn to conventional medicine, naturopathy or other forms of treatment instead. However, had you gotten to know genuine homeopathy and had you understood its principles then you would have been saved from making such mistakes.

But just what was Daniel Kaiser's, Klunker's and Gypser's understanding of genuine homeopathy? The answer to this question can be divided into two parts: firstly, methodology and principles and secondly, the significance of genuine homeopathy. The methodology of genuine homeopathy is homeopathy *as it was originally*: "Hahnemann is everything". This means that if we had understood Hahnemann properly, then we would know everything vital there was to know about regarding homeopathy. Apart from Hahnemann, others made important contributions to the theory and practice of homeopathy as well. Bönninghausen, Hering, Boger and—to a certain extent—even Kent are the ones always called to mind, but in the end everything started from Hahnemann and joins up with him again. In particular, the principles of genuine homeopathy consist of the drug proving on the healthy, the prescription of a single drug, the diluting and dynamization process and—most importantly—the law of similars. Whatever is left over belongs in the realm of psycho-homeopathy or other false doctrines.

Those who have understood these facts can surely appreciate the great importance attached to homeopathy. If you apply homeopathy *lege artis*, then cure *must* result. It is not possible that an illness *might* be cured, no in fact it *must* be cured. Thus, assuming that homeopathy is correctly practiced, it guarantees a predictable cure. We could already know *prior* to prescribing a drug whether it is capable of effecting a cure or not. This means that we would have an aprioristic certainty of cure. This certainty would be the result of the law of similars on which homeopathic practice is based. This law could aid us in treating the incontestible symptoms of illness (revealed in the anamnesis) with the incontestible symptoms of the proving (revealed in the drug proving on the healthy). The Materia medica builds a reliable foundation which makes it possible for us to know in advance which drug must effect a cure in a given case. Thus, we would not just have the statistical *probability* that a certain drug will help in a certain case of illness, but rather the assurance that a drug chosen on the grounds of the law of similars will cure the illness in question. This is not so in conventional medicine, where you can only make the observation *following* the application of a given treatment as to whether or not the patient belongs to the percentage of people who profit from such a treatment. However, when it comes to genuine homeopathy, you can be sure a priori—even *prior* to drug intake—that the correct drug will effect a cure. Hahnemann was the first person in medical history to realize this fundamental difference and it signifies a fundamental revolution of drug treatment as we know it in the Western world. Thus, for the first time in history the art of healing attains the status of a science in the modern sense. The essence of sciences of our day, which also include physics and chemistry, consists of knowing precisely what will happen under certain conditions.

After all, when activating a light switch time and time again, you would expect the light to go on 100%, as long as the light bulb and the power circuit are functioning properly, i.e. as long as certain requirements are fulfilled. The idea that the light would go on for example only 80% of all the times it is switched on would not cross anyone's mind. Based on the proving

of drugs and the law of similars it is possible to predict a cure for the first time in the history of medicine. Thus, this means that genuine homeopathy would meet today's understanding of science, quite contrary to conventional medicine which lacks reliable and aprioristic knowledge.

This standpoint however interesting it may seem, lacks tenability in its apodictic form. Therefore some of its aspects will be discussed in more depth below.

1. Homeopathy in its true and genuine form does exist, but has very little in common with all other false forms of homeopathy

The premise on which this statement is based can be expressed more generally: The *possibility* of homeopathy in its true and genuine form does exist. However, it is doubtful for various reasons. It must be noted that the question here is not whether or not the kind of homeopathy presented by Daniel is the only true form or not. (When it comes down to it, every school of homeopathy claims to represent homeopathy in its true form anyhow). The question at stake is whether or not such a genuine kind of homeopathy *can* exist at all. In this case, homeopathy would have to be a kind of homeopathy-in-itself, the earthly image of something beyond this world. Thus, to some degree an ideal kind of homeopathy has to exist outside of our minds, so that we can discover and practice it. Accordingly, homeopathy *in this sense* would be universal, platonically speaking. Up to this very day however, the conflict with regard to the universality (do things or beings exist in the general sense or not, is there a such thing as the horse-in-itself or are there just horses that are perceived in a different manner?) is undecided and it would presumptuous to want to end this conflict at this point in time considering it has continued over the centuries. The sole purpose here is to show what topics are addressed when genuine homeopathy is put to discussion.

There is yet another reason why the discussion about true and genuine homeopathy is doubtful and this reason is not hairsplitting and less theoretical. Homeopathy true and genuine must also be homeopathy in its optimal form (at least theoretically speaking). If it were not the best possible form, then we would have to search for other forms of homeopathy which could be more successful in practice. True homeopathy may not yet be able to achieve all that which it is capable of in theory, but eventually when all work on it has been completed, i.e. when the *Materia medica* is more sound, when medical repertories have become more reliable, then there can be no better form of homeopathy. The claim to truth and authenticity is therefore inevitably connected to the claim to a kind of completeness. It does not get better than that. Spinedi, who wrote an article entitled “Die Homöopathie im 21. Jahrhundert” (homeopathy in the 21st century) which was published in the year 2000 in the ZKH, sees things in a very similar way. Spinedi himself also claims that there is an optimal form of homeopathy. However, he does not see it being realized in aprioristic homeopathy, rather in the gallery of ancestors: Hahnemann-Kent-Schmidt-Künzli. He demands the following:

“Homeopathy of the present century must recognize the work of our great ancestors and in acknowledgement of such it is possible to integrate additional knowledge over the course of time. However, the basic framework has been marked out and must be respected if you want to be successful. In this sense I find the critical review of *Hahnemann*, written by a doctor doing his internship and published in the ZKH, seriously doubtful. (Thus Spinedi pays reference to my article entitled “Samuel Hahnemanns Gratwanderung etc.” [Samuel Hahnemann's tightrope walk etc.], which I would like to mention, in order not to have *not* mentioned it.) Just like a review in bad taste on *Kent* in the AHZ [...]. In the future the editors of homeopathic periodicals should only accept reviews of great homeopaths, which come from true masters or very experienced homeopathic physicians.”

Unfortunately, no one challenged Spinedi's appeal to the public concerning *censorship*. In conclusion, I should like to say that the claim of advocating homeopathy in its true and thus optimal form is within a dangerous and close range to the repression of a fruitful discourse.

2. *True homeopathy is homeopathy as it was originally, i.e. the kind of homeopathy practiced in particular by Hahnemann and Bönninghausen*

What kind of homeopathy is meant when we refer to Hahnemann's homeopathy? Are we talking about Hahnemann prior to the teachings about psora, the shadows of which go so far back that you can only consider the first edition of the Organon as being "free of psora"? Or do we mean Hahnemann at a later age when he did not let a single year pass without establishing new maxims even if they contradicted the previous ones at times; as if he were forced to an ever greater experimental rage due to a premonition of impending death? As far as we know and as far as Hahnemann is concerned, you cannot find any stable, true, correct or original form of homeopathy, because theory as well as practice were in constant flux.

And when Bönninghausen, Hering, Boger and Kent are brought forward as guarantors of true homeopathy, why should not Lutze, Lippe, Künzli or Dorcsi? In the end the iconographic choice is arbitrary. Therefore, the discussion regarding an original form of homeopathy reminds us of a Golden Age, in which homeopathy was practiced in the manner lay down by its creator. What followed was the expulsion from Paradise, because nonsensical pupils fell victim to evil snakes and false teachings. Since then the only way to give absolution to homeopathy is by recognizing the legitimate claim to absoluteness regarding its true form.

3. *The principles of true homeopathy lie in the prescription of a single drug, the proving of drugs on the healthy, the diluting and dynamisation process and especially the law of similars*

Even Klunker and Gypser themselves have written in detail about the inaccuracy of medicinal substances and their Materia medica. It goes without saying that improvements in this area are both possible and necessary. And yet the question remains as to whether or not, following the development of more reliable tools, you can claim that the principles of homeopathy have sufficiently been determined by doing so. Statements like the above stylize homeopathy to a pure practice which cures without theory. All principles are derived from the practical side. What is missing are the details concerning a picture of man and an understanding of disease, on which every concept in medicine is founded, be it said or left unsaid. This point is examined in detail especially by Klunker amongst others (see bibliography) to the extent that he postulates a basis comprising a picture of man relating to existential analysis (according to Martin Heidegger and Medard Boss) and a phenomenological approach to disease symptoms. If this is right and proper is yet another question, one to be answered elsewhere.

At this time I would like to emphasize only one point, which will prove to be important in the latter part of this article. The fact that the law of similars lays the foundation for every form of homeopathy can hardly be denied. Nonetheless, it must be made clear that the law of similars is an indistinct law due to the word similar. What does similar mean? There is no *clear-cut* answer to the question as to when two things are similar to one another. The question as to when something is *more similar* than something else can be answered unambiguously to an ever far lesser extent. Similarity is also a question of one's subjective point of view. The term similar(ity) always already implies a kind of groping, a searching attempt, because we can never be quite sure that we have found the curative-similar drug. In every medical case there are several similar drugs, but only one of them is to be prescribed. (Otherwise we could make it easy on ourselves and give just anyone of the drugs in question). In choosing the fitting-similar drug, we will always find some remaining indistinctness and thus a remaining uncertainty, which is inseparably linked with the underlying law of "Similia similibus". What we personally *feel* as being especially similar depends on numerous factors

which can never be completely disclosed. Thus similar(ity) also means that an uncertainty will always exist, one which cannot be determined exactly.

4. *The significance of true homeopathy lies in its aprioristic certainty of cure, ie. in knowing in advance which drug must effect a cure in a given medical case. Thus homeopathy is the actual scientific drug treatment in the modern sense*

This is probably the most important statement of the position presented; a position which is inadequate for several reasons. To begin with, the claim to absoluteness has a bitter after-taste: A small group of distinguishers knows about the true significance of the method they practice, yet everyone else fails to recognize the vastness of Hahnemann's method, its revolutionary character and the fact that his methodology broke fresh ground. Now you could say that new views on complicated matters are always only recognized by few at the start, before they are generally accepted. Nevertheless, it makes you wonder why current publications on scientific theories or medical history do not share the view represented here, probably do not even discuss it. So it could be that Fräntzki may be heading in the wrong direction regarding his interpretation of the essence of modern sciences and their relationship to homeopathy—perhaps just due to the fact that he overly commits himself to an interpretation of Kant according to Heidegger and in doing so neglects other philosophical currents. Apart from that he does not seem to be competent when it comes to medical history. Of course these are not convincing arguments contra the viewpoint presented here. At best they could prevent an overly uncritical acceptance of such.

What still seems more important is the above mentioned indistinctness in the answer to the question: "What is similar?" How can you derive the certainty of cure from a law that implies uncertainty? It may be that a modern form of scientific drug treatment has to know the drug of cure in advance. It might also be that this is more scientific than work on statistical probabilities, just as it is practiced by drug treatment in conventional medicine. Perhaps all this is so—but what remains unclear is how knowing in advance is compatible with the basis of the law of similars. Whether or not a drug is similar enough in order to cure a disease can only be decided *after* it has been given. Beforehand you can only hope that not any other perhaps not yet even proven drug would have been more suitable. *Therefore, homeopathy can a priori not be aprioristic.* Not even Gypser's recently made restriction that the postulated certainty exists only in the theoretical and not in the factual sense can change that. Beside the fact that the purpose of this differentiation is not further explained, based on the indistinctness of every kind of similarity, there will never be a theoretical certainty of cure, however it may be understood, using the "similia similibus" law.

Thus it remains questionable whether the claim to superiority (according to scientific theory) of drug treatment in homeopathy compared to conventional medicine is legitimate or not. It does at least seem strange that the statistical probability of conventional treatment (for example, the number needed to treat) which is in part so exceptionally well-known is looked down upon and that instead, the law of similars which implies uncertainty is proclaimed the standard of scientific drug treatment.

Counter-project: limited pluralism

In his article Daniel writes that he is a physician in the first place and then he is a homeopath. So, of course he would also apply the methods of conventional medicine in his practice when required. He chooses the best treatment method out of the whole spectrum, ie. the one which promises the most success in a given case. Medicine on the whole thus consists of a multitude of more or less appropriate possibilities. So when medicine is taken as a whole, you can see that a multitude of methods are already prevalent. Is there a good reason why such a multitude of methods should not be permitted within homeopathy as well? Perhaps there are cases

which can be solved better according to Bönninghausen and maybe there are others which require Kent-Schmidt-Künzli-Spinedi. Then again others will be cured according to Masi, Sankaran, Dorcsi or Vithoulkas. Why not? In practice this is really what often happens. As long as we do not have any convincing arguments for the superiority of one current over the other, as long as we do not have any reliable data, then we will just have to be satisfied with a multitude of methods. Right now we just do not know yet which method is better. Who knows, maybe inexperienced laymen who practice homeopathy for everyday aches and pains according to their handbooks—a form of homeopathy that often has nothing more in common with that which is practiced by Klunker and Gypser than the fact that a pellet is sucked on—have the greatest success. Can anyone provide conclusive evidence to prove the contrary today?

In order to prevent misunderstandings: We do not believe that everything romping around on the medical sector is good and makes sense. Evidently methods do exist which lack any trace of comprehensibility. In the same way some forms of treatment which are referred as being homeopathic, use this name without just reason. When *analogies* are drawn between a substance with medicinal properties and a patient's attributes instead of recognizing the similarity between symptoms of a proving and a patient's ailments, then we are dealing at most with a form of homeopathy in the farthest sense of the word. If an intellectual with a head of concrete gets the Berlin Wall prescribed in a high potency or if a person in a black and yellow T-shirt receives the honey bee in a homeopathic dose, then it probably would be more correct to speak of *analogopathy* instead of homeopathy. An analogy can be understood as a similarity on different levels. In doing so, we greatly extend the sphere of meaning with respect to similarity. The definition of this term is not clear anyway and when understood as above it takes on an almost endless dimension which lets all things "somehow" seem similar to each other. What we describe as being analog is dependent on our subjective opinion and fantasy more so than similarity which is limited only to the symptomatic level. Therefore, what analogopathy implies is the renouncement of the claim regarding intersubjective comprehensibility and thus the relinquishment of a structured form of teachability and learnability. However, intersubjective comprehensibility, teachability and learnability (as well as the effort to attain clarity of language) are general features of scientific character and of science itself. The existence of these characteristics is a necessary requirement in order that a medical or homeopathic method respectively is worthy of being discussed seriously and examined more closely. If on the one hand we are against any claim to absoluteness regarding internal questions on homeopathy and instead are for pluralism, then we have to make sure on the other hand that this pluralism can only exist within certain limits and cannot be extended as desired. The limits of the pluralism referred to cannot be drawn by way of homeopathic consideration, rather they have to be determined by arguments against the background of medical and scientific theories. The above mentioned general distinctions of scientific character and of science itself are of course only valid within the medicine field and thus *also* hold a prominent position with respect to homeopathy, i.e. intersubjective comprehensibility, teachability and learnability as well as efforts towards clarity of language. Only those methods of treatment which fulfill these requirements will be assigned a place within homeopathic pluralism.

Hence it follows from what has been said that two things can be expected from people who hold certain views within homeopathy which are often defended quite vehemently. First of all it can be expected that they expound their views in a manner which is understandable in the intersubjective sense, teachable and learnable without attaching all too much importance to the intuitiveness of the individual physician when practicing homeopathy. Secondly it can be expected that the superiority, postulated by various groups when comparing other methods, is not demonstrated as in the past by way of theoretical plausibilities, the presentation of

isolated cases or other comparable and unreliable statements, but rather with solid facts. It is of course obvious that such facts—even when published unadulterated—will never be able to present a *fundamentum inconcussum* and that some uncertainty will always remain. It is also as plain as day that physicians supporting a particular current cannot be seriously requested to also evaluate these facts correctly and scientifically and at the same time treat patients in their practice on a daily basis. But it can be requested that people show a more reserved attitude in discussions dealing with matters and questions yet to be settled. As long as convincing evidence for the priority of a particular method of treatment is lacking, there should also be no attempt to draw away proselytes. The matter is still open. We are still searching. And *this* is exactly what our goal should be for the time being: the acceptance of this ongoing process. This means allowing the paths from various directions to run together, presenting new research results and discussing them. It also means questioning the principles of homeopathy time and time again. A high level discussion about homeopathy with participants who have completely different viewpoints would make a lot of sense. Last but not least, it means showing a kind of free spirit in a person like yourself who wants to get to the bottom of things and is thus able to listen to other people's opinions and to accept them, not because you are permissive or arbitrary, but rather because you are really convinced that you cannot know it any better (yet).

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