

This letter first appeared in Homeopathy Today (2001, Vol 21 (5), May: 21-22), the newsletter of the National Center for Homeopathy, Alexandria, VA, USA, (www.homeopathic.org) edited by Julian Winston.

The authors turn against the critic of Julian Winston (Dec 2000).

" No good to homeopathy can come from one person or group trying to impose their idea of what is 'good homeopathy' upon others. Let ideas and clinical results speak for themselves."

Roger Morrison et al.

Against Divisiveness

Dear Editor:

It was with a heavy heart that we read the latest edition of Homeopathy Today. The editorial attacks on the ideas of Rajan Sankaran, Jan Scholten, Nancy Herrick, Todd Rowe and others are unwarranted. While it is very clear that Mr. Winston has a great love for and desire to protect homeopathy, his sweeping use of the editorial position to advocate his personal beliefs has become a detriment to the National Center. Many people have dropped their membership in the NCH because of the increasingly divisive tone in the newsletter. No good to homeopathy can come from one person or group trying to impose their idea of what is "good homeopathy" upon others. Let ideas and clinical results speak for themselves. Thus this letter has been examined, co-edited, and co-signed by a large number of concerned and prominent homeopaths who wish to raise their voices against intolerance and divisiveness. We have much important work ahead of us; we cannot allow ourselves to be sidetracked by partisan bickering

Especially pernicious is the oft repeated technique of proposing a "straw man" case to show that one set of ideas is unworkable. In one glaring example of this technique, Dr. Sheppard presents a case of Anacardium which he uses to criticize Sankaran's concept of kingdom. Two of the main elements of the case described were extreme sensitivity and feeling offended which are hallmarks of what Sankaran describes as belonging to the plant kingdom. In fact, Dr. Sheppard shows such a superficial understanding of the concepts being criticized that it appears he has not bothered to actually read Sankaran's books before publishing his opinion.

All homeopaths try to find the simillimum using every possible clue Our materia medica and repertory are the bedrock of practice and each of the writers attacked are expert with these tools. If we had a perfect set of information to work with, no innovation and no new remedies would be needed Unfortunately that is not our situation. The majority of our remedies are poorly proven-- pitifully less than the fine provings of Ms. Herrick that Mr. Winston criticizes. Our repertories are contradictory and mistake ridden, Even old remedies that are clearly described in our literature are not available from any pharmacy. We do not know everything-- in fact we know very little. Many times we miss seeing cases which are staring us in the face if we could only open our minds to the patient and see in a different way. Is there any among us so arrogant as to believe he cures every case? Can't we admit our many failures? Every homeopath (including Dr. Gypser and Dr. Sheppard we feel certain) has dozens-- no hundreds-- of failures that arrive at the doors

of his colleagues. Not one of us holds "The Answer." What is needed is tolerance to hearing new ideas and techniques without ever loosening our grip on the basics-- the *materia medica* and the repertory.

What is most concerning, however is the effort to make serious people sound ridiculous, unthinking or superficial. Mr. Winston seems to feel capable of judging whether or not something is or is not homeopathy. He states that Jan Scholten's work is not homeopathy because there are no provings-- thus ignoring some dozen provings reported in Scholten's book. He states that there are insufficient cases of Ms. Herrick's remedies to place them in the repertory thus ignoring multiple cases reported in journals throughout the world. Ms. Herrick's careful exploration of the nuances of new remedies need to be supported and improved upon rather than criticized. Is it impossible to believe people of good faith when their ideas conflict with our own? Indeed, by the criterion set by Mr. Winston (supervisors, placebo controls, etc.), most of the remedies in our *materia medicas* would be thrown out-- even those proved by Hahnemann. What are we to make of the fact that 95% of the time Dr. Gypser prefers remedies proved from before 1864? Is this a valid way to determine the *simillimum*? Do provings become valid simply because they are old?

Mr. Winston and Dr. Sheppard also criticize Sankaran's concept of the "central delusion." But what does Sankaran's search for a central delusion mean? In practice it is nothing more than the attempt to look deeply into the mind and heart of our patient to find the suffering-- call it "symptoms" if you prefer-- of the individual in front of us. This is not theorizing; it is listening to phenomena in exactly the way Goethe spoke. When Sankaran uses a dream it is not by "interpreting" the dream or "theorizing" as suggested by Dr. Sheppard and Mr. Winston. Rather the only question asked about the dream is how the patient **felt** in the dream. This is a simple technique for accessing the suffering the patient feels-- his "state" as Hahnemann put it.

Mangiolavori speaks of the general themes of a plant family; Sankaran speaks of themes of the kingdoms, Vithoukas speaks of an essence; Herrick speaks of the behavior of the animal whose milks she has proved; Scholten speaks of similarities of symptoms in related chemicals. When all of these fine homeopaths write of their ideas, it is to **add** to our current understanding. None of them asks us to throw out our repertories, rather they say, "When you find yourself with a patient for whom repertorization does not lead to a clear remedy try looking at the case from this perspective to see if it may shed some light." If some misuse the work, should we throw out the concept? Do some people carry these ideas too far? Yes, but let's us not throw out the baby with the bathwater. We are not a science that knows every answer. Rather we are like a family working together on a jigsaw puzzle. One new piece can be found and grouped with another piece, even if we do not see at the moment how this discovery fits into the whole puzzle.

Perhaps coincidentally a letter by Steven Olsen is also published in this issue. This letter objects to the "Doctrine of signatures " It is true that Hahnemann disparaged this doctrine. At the time of Hahnemann the "doctrine of signatures" meant simply and **only** that the shape of a substance could be used to determine the organ the plant was likely to help (for example a bean-shaped leaf applies to kidney ailments). This rudimentary doctrine was criticized by Hahnemann. But nowhere does Hahnemann criticize the idea that the source of the remedy has a bearing on the symptoms it produces. Why are nine of our snake remedies listed for fear or dreams of snakes? Why

do numerous plant remedies have their aggravations at the exact hour when the species opens its flower (*Pulsatilla* at sunset, etc.). Why are so many of our remedies made from creeping plants found to have dreams or desire to travel? Is this coincidence or is it possible that the life struggles and habits of the remedy source do influence the feelings of the provers? We cannot explain how this might take place but why should this concept be so implausible? Is it inconceivable to Mr. Olsen that the physiology of the plant or animal from which a remedy is taken will have a bearing upon the symptoms produced in the proving? And if the physiology of the remedy source can give us clues, why would we ignore the possibility of using these hints? Would any responsible homeopath use *only* this type of data in formulating a remedy decision? Decidedly not.

We hope we are wrong in supposing that all of these articles indicate a strong editorial conviction against and intolerance to hearing new concepts. It seems that Mr. Winston has developed a clear image of what he believes is "Good" homeopathy and that Dr. Gypser ranks high in his concept. We can see this in many articles and reviews in recent issues of *Homeopathy Today*: He criticizes the text of Dr. Rowe; he takes the unusual step of re-reviewing Ms. Herrick's book (not liking the earlier favorable review); his recent monthly columns have strongly criticized several other authors. We do not believe Mr. Winston is taking *Homeopathy Today* in a heartily direction but rather using it as a bully pulpit to voice his own personal views. Perhaps Mr. Winston no longer feels able to represent the homeopathic community?

We are not suggesting that Mr. Winston does not have a right to express his opinion. However the most recent issue is given almost entirely over to this intolerant viewpoint. We want to be certain that Mr. Winston's personal opinion is not allowed to speak for our whole community. One immediate way to reassure the many staunch homeopaths who are concerned about this editorial leaning is to allow others in specific fields to review new books. For example, allow someone who has actually done a proving to review a work on provings; allow someone who is involved in the actual teaching of constitutional homeopathy to review books on education; allow someone who is an actual homeopathic practitioner to review books about homeopathic practice; and so forth. *Homeopathy Today* is one of the major voices of our community. Mr. Winston should feel proud that he has made such a contribution to this newsletter and the community owes him much. It would be a shame to allow this newsletter to devolve into partisanship and divisiveness which will only wound the community it exists to serve.

Roger Morrison, MD, Author, *Desktop Guide to Keynotes and Confirmatory Symptoms*;
President, Hahnemann Medical Clinic; Instructor, Hahnemann College of Homeopathy

Jonathan Shore, MD, DHt, Instructor, Hahnemann College of Homeopathy;
Past editor, *Journal of the American Institute of Homeopathy*

Nancy Herrick, PA, Author, *Animal Minds, Human Voices*;
Instructor, Hahnemann College of Homeopathy

Dr. Rajan Sankaran, Author, *Spirit of Homeopathy* and *System of Homeopathy*

Judith Reichenberg-Ullman, ND, Past president, International Foundation for Homeopathy; Author, *Whole Woman Homeopathy*

Steven King, ND, Past president, International Foundation for Homeopathy;
Course coordinator, IFH professional course

Ted Chapman. MD, DHt, Clinical Instructor, Harvard and Tufts university Medical Schools; Past President, American Institute of Homeopathy;
President, Council on Homeopathy Education

Robert Ullman, ND, Author, *Ritalin Free Kids*;
Past vice president, International Foundation for Homeopathy;
Instructor, IFH professional course

Mitchell Fleischer, MD, Instructor, National Center for Homeopathy

Ed Kondrot, MD, Instructor, Desert Institute of Classical Homeopathy

David Riley, MD, Editor in Chief, *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*;
Medical Director, Integrative Medicine Institute;
Co-founder, Integrative Medicine Education Associates

Duncan Soule, MD, Director, Fulcrum Institute;
Instructor, Hahnemann College of Homeopathy

Declan Hammond, RSHom, Directors Irish School of Homeopathy

Jeff Baker, ND, Director, Maui Academy of Homeopathy

Deborah Gordon, MD, Instructor, Hahnemann College of Homeopathy

Melissa Fairbanks, RSHom, Director, Four Winds Seminar

Corrie Hiwat, RSHom,
Editor, *Homeopathic Links*, international journal for classical homeopathy

Harry van der Zee, MD, Author, *Miasms in Labor*
Editor, *Homeopathic Links*, international journal for classical homeopathy

Andrew Bonner, ND, Hahnemann College of Homeopathy

Rebecca Reese, MD, Hahnemann College of Homeopathy

Richard Moskowitz, MD, Past President, NCH; Reviewer, *Homeopathy Today*;
Author, *Homeopathic Medicines for Pregnancy and Childbirth*, etc.

Eric Sommerman, PhD, RSHom (NA), Director, Northwestern Academy of Homeopathy

Deborah Collins, MD, RCHom, International lecturer