

Dr. Anton Rohrer gave this talk at the 153th annual congress of the German central association of homeopathic practitioners (Topic: *panta rhei* -All is flowing - What remains?) on the 24th May 2001 in Hamburg.

The talk is dedicated Dr. Will Klunker on the occasion of his 78th birthday with obliging affection and gratitude.

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In this statement it is explained that the principle of healing certainty, which can be determined in advance, essentially belongs to the homoeopathy of Hahnemann. The realization of this principle is bound to a radical phenomenological approach to the investigation of the symptoms of the remedy as well as those of the patient.

Concerning this an enormous break with tradition is to be found in modern homoeopathy; in practice, when trying to find the remedy ideas are compared rather than observing real facts (phenomena). Hidden processes, central ideas etc. lying behind the phenomena are looked for.

Today the view upon the principle of healing certainty has been obstructed by traps and failures in practice.

Anton Rohrer

Is all flowing? Certainty in finding the right remedy.

I would like to take up the theme of this congress, the heraclitic “*panta rhei*”, whereby the organisers themselves have already posed the next question as to what remains. The statement “all is flowing ” contains a perpetual ignorance (ignorance is the literal translation of the Sanskrit word “*avidya*”, delusion, general lack of knowledge). If things are in constant flux, are changing, what is certain? In this lecture I will try to explain how this applies to homeopathy.

The aspect of certainty in the homeopathic art of healing, which relies on a legitimate relationship between remedy and patient symptoms, was an essential part of Hahnemann’s new medicinal concept. Hahnemann emphasises in the preface to the *Organon*:

“Homeopathy is a perfectly simple system of medicine always remaining fixed in its principles as in its practice.” (Preface, p. 10).

This is the exact opposite of Heraclitus’ statement. What have we failed to take into consideration these days? I myself experienced very clearly how much this aspect of healing certainty is missing in modern homeopathic practice and literature at a lecturers’ conference in Alonissos, which Vithoukas had organised, and was attended by prominent European and Indian homeopathic teachers. After the presentation of a case, which could be well heard by all listeners, every one present recommended a different remedy which of course could be well justified but everyone discerned a different aspect to be important for their choice. Quite contrary to this I have an anecdote from Hering (*Archive for the Homeopathic Art of Healing*, 13, 1833, 2, 103-106, in *Gypser, Herings Medical Writings*, Vol. 1, pp. 382-384), who once stayed overnight at a nobleman’s place. This man had been ill for 20 years and had consulted

477 doctors during this time. Every doctor had a different opinion on his illness and hence a differing therapy suggestion. The nobleman therefore did not follow any of the advice. Doctor no. 301 was S. Hahnemann. "The name of the illness is 0, the remedy is 0. He is the cleverest, he cried, he said: the name of the illness is not his concern, and the name of the remedy is not my concern; the main thing is the healing process. I asked why he didn't let himself be treated by the cleverest doctor? Because he is only one, I would like three that are at one." Hering invited this baron to try an experiment and they put together a case study and sent it to 33 different homeopathic doctors with the plea to name a remedy for this illness. The outcome: Hering received a barrel of Rhein wine vintage 1822, because 22 doctors arrived at the same diagnosis. The baron wrote back to Hering: "Then I saw that you were right and that there is certainty in this world."

This agreement among the first homeopaths appears in the meantime to have become lost. Is it conceivable today that 22 out of 33 homeopaths would choose the same remedy? When I told Vithoulkas this anecdote he attributed this discrepancy to the increased complexity of today's patients compared with those days. I do not agree with this opinion, as to why the case history and remedy choice for a patient suffering from gout be more complicated than back then. What is different are the differing opinions of the many homeopathic schools of thought about what is to be healed in the patient and the arising consequences regarding the remedy representation in the *Materia Medica*. The first generation of homeopaths, Hahnemann's close students, had a different opinion on the composition of homeopathy as we experience it today.

Homeopathy was established as an art of healing at the end of the 18th century. It is a healing method with medicines which, when certain conditions are met, allows healing to follow in accordance with clear principles. Demanding that a result, in our case healing, should take place according to clear principles, sounds like a natural science, sounds like technology: when certain conditions are fulfilled a certain result must then take place. Technology is a science which counts on certainty. The high performance of space and television technology are only made possible by recognizing that given laws function in accordance with natural given facts. When these given laws are fulfilled then the expected result must take place. These days we are so completely surrounded by these basic principles of technology and they have pervaded our lives to such an extent that we do not think about them anymore, taking them for granted.

With regard to this exposition I refer to my teacher Dr. Will Klunker (Switzerland), who has described and shed light on this subject in several essays and seminars. (See e.g. "The Art of Healing and the rightful claim for certainty, Hahnemann's address to orthodox medicine", *Zeitschrift für Klassische Homöopathie* 40, 5/96 or "Hahnemann's conditions for scientific medical healing", *Documenta Homeopathica*, vol. 5, 1982.)

Everything that technically surrounds us, functions according to certain principles which have also been verified in practice. This was elaborated by the sciences such as physics and chemistry. These sciences are the product of modern development, established by men such as Galilei, Newton or Kepler. The philosophical prerequisite for modern thoughts was created by René Descartes (1596-1650). In the 15th-17th centuries something new happened in European history: about 2000 years after the great Greek philosophers, an epoch began which we call the modern age. The middle ages had ended, a completely new feeling developed, Descartes was the founder of the new way of thinking, he created the foundation for our present day science, which had not existed up to then. Knowledge was separated from beliefs (Middle Ages) or from the Greek and Roman tradition (e.g. in medicine which up until the new age stood in the tradition of Greek and Roman doctors). What is new is no longer the search for truth (which was now no longer searched for by theologians and philosophers) but the search for certainty. Descartes looked for certainty, that is something that no longer can be

doubted and truth becomes truth only when it is certain. This new age concept of certainty is bound to the thinking subject (*cognito ergo sum*). That resulted in the separation into two areas of being: the subject, the inner world, *ego, res cogitans* and the object world, the outside world, the world of the extended body, *res extensa*. (This division allows for the abuse of the outside world or manipulation of the outside world, known as nature. When referring to Descartes' philosophy in connection with homeopathy here, it does not mean that I agree with the likelihood of manipulation. After all, our modern day medical science pays reference to Descartes in part too. However, Descartes was the first in our present planetary age to speak of this certainty aspect. It is this claim for certainty, that Descartes also demands from medicine. (This concept was first taken up in medicine by S. Hahnemann and it is only this aspect that interests me!)

Physics is the science of the outside world. R. Descartes writes (*Discours de la Methode*, 1637):

“Since I understood several general principles of physics and initially had checked them, I could see their enormous potential compared with those hitherto. For the benefit of mankind I can no longer keep silent. As I can see in these principles the possibility of immensely useful knowledge for our life: namely that practical sciences can be found which will make us masters and owners of nature, by clear and distinct knowledge of the power of all natural bodies and their uses. This is not only desirable for the invention of innumerable scientific tricks, which enable us to enjoy the fruits of every comfort on this earth, but also mainly to help preserve health which is without doubt the most valuable possession in life. I believe that one should search for this in medicine. It is true that which is currently practised possesses little that is of use which is worth mentioning.”

This modern scientific concept, through its demand for certainty, brings people the possession of basic being. Truth is now certainty and Descartes demands this especially in medicine. What are all possessions and comforts on earth worth, when we are not healthy and therefore not able to enjoy them?

More than 150 years after Descartes' demand, Doctor Samuel Hahnemann realizes this postulate for pharmacology. Hahnemann addressed the public in 1796 with the following essay: “Attempt to find a new principle for the healing power of medicines, along with some insight into the present ones.”

It is a completely new revolutionary principle:

“In order to find out the true healing power of a medicine for a chronic disease, one must look at the specific artificial disease which is aroused in the human body, and then fit these to a similar morbid bodily condition which should be improved.”

The healing relationship between the disease caused by the medicine and the patient's natural disease is to be found in the similarity of symptoms. In 1790, six years prior to this publication, Hahnemann struck upon this healing principle during his examination of China, Peruvian bark. Later he wrote following comment about China in his *Materia Medica Pura* (MMP) (Vol. 3). Homeopathy teaches us, “how one can change disease quickly, gently and permanently into health with predictable certainty using clear answers from proved natural remedies.”

What made this principle new and revolutionary is the “predictable certainty”. For the first time in the history of medicine pharmacology is able to fulfil the criteria of being a science in the modern sense, like physics and chemistry. Hahnemann writes in his preface to the 2nd edition of the *Organon* (1819): “Speculative reasoning has therefore no place in basic empirical science, in physics, chemistry and pharmacology.”

-that means, he puts the art of medicine as a science in the same class as chemistry and physics. Hahnemann creates a medical science with his revolutionary new principle that functions like natural sciences such as physics and chemistry: based on the results of remedy provings we are able to know in advance, which remedies are principally right for which disease. Hahnemann's intention was to create a defined, rational relationship between the disease to be cured and the remedy cure. This relationship is, if it is to cure, the similarity relationship. Thus homeopathy is scientific, because it complies with this idea of science as it has already been outlined: a practical science whereby, when certain conditions are fulfilled, a specific result occurs with certainty. The conditions which must be fulfilled to ensure healing are referred to by Hahnemann in §3 Organon:

"If the physician clearly perceives what is to be cured in diseases, in every individual case of diseases (knowledge of disease, indication), if he clearly perceives what is curable in medicines, that is to say, in each individual medicine (knowledge of medicinal powers) and if he knows how to adapt according to clearly defined principles, what is curative in medicines to what he has discovered to be undoubtedly morbid in the patient, so that the recovery must take place, ... then he understands how to treat judiciously and rationally, and he is a true practitioner of the healing art."

Klunker called this sentence "to adapt so that recovery must take place" The most important phrase in western medical history! The difference between science and medicine lies in their subject matter. According to Descartes the subject matter of science is that all bodies function according to mechanical principles that one can define mathematically, but these cannot become ill. That which is morbid is the subject matter of medicine, which cannot be determined by quantity alone, in other words by that which is measurable. Hahnemann created a suitable mode of access by taking the patient's symptoms for what they were, as given phenomena and did not analyse or redefine them, as was normally done in medicine. I do not know of any other medical system in the East and West, that so strictly sticks to the symptoms, to the phenomena of the disease, as does homeopathy. The homeopath sees the disease as the patient's embodiment of the symptoms, that is the totality of the symptoms (§§6, 7, 8, 14-18 etc.), not more and not less. In every other medical system, symptoms are seen as the expression of an underlying disorder, and it depends on treating the "real", causal disorder behind the symptoms. A pathophysiological concept must be found based on the symptoms in order to be able to treat them. A symptom is seen as a reference point to an underlying disease: I would, for example, when a patient complains of burning in the stomach, first diagnose an *Ulcus ventriculi* to be the cause. In order to be able to treat according to my pathophysiological concept, i.e. what I suppose to be the cause of a stomach ulcer, I would prescribe either acid blockers, antibiotics or psychopharmacologic drugs. Here, especially, we see "panta rhei" particularly pronounced: today's state of the art is tomorrow's professional cure as pathophysiological concepts are constantly changing. Hahnemann's genius lay in the ability not to get involved at the level of constantly changing concepts. Science is based on either mathematics or phenomena. Hahnemann demands that phenomena should be seen as genuine, which presupposes a high degree of reality checks and puts great demand on the practitioner, not to assume, to interpret or to change. What inspired Hahnemann to create a medicine which fulfils these modern scientific ideas? Homeopathy is something completely new within medical history. It can only be understood within the concept of modern European intellectual history and everyone who names precursors of Homeopathy, like Paracelsus as representative of the Doctrine of Signatures, overlook these basic conditions of Homeopathy, the demand for scientific healing. Where does Hahnemann get his motivation, his impulse to change medicine from?

He gives some very personal insights into his own state of mind in an open letter to Hufeland (Extract from a Letter to a Physician of high standing, on the Great Necessity of a

Regeneration in Medicine, 1808). He writes:

“I could not conscientiously treat the unknown morbid conditions of my suffering brethren by these unknown medicines, which being very active substances, may, unless applied with rigorous exactness, easily occasion death or produce new affections and chronic maladies, often more difficult to remove than the original disease. To become, thus, the murderer or the tormentor of my brethren was to me an idea so frightful and overwhelming, that soon after my marriage, I renounced the practice of medicine that I might no longer incur the risk of doing injury and I engaged, as you know, exclusively in chemistry and in literary occupations. But I became a father, serious diseases threatened my beloved children, my flesh and blood. My scruples redoubled when I saw that I could afford them no certain relief. But! where to get sure help, from our teachings of the power of medicines which is only based on vague observations, often only presumed opinions, and by the innumerable number of arbitrary opinions on disease from our pathologists?...Where to get help, certain help? the inconsolable father sighed when hearing the whining of his dear, above everything else dear, dear ill children. Night and barrenness around me, -no prospect of lightening my oppressed heart! ...He the father of all, should coldly look upon his tormented diseased, his most beloved creations and the otherwise omnipotent genius of mankind and not make possible an easy, secure and reliable way to look at these illnesses from the right perspective and how to question the medicines, for what they are useful, and for what they are really and certainly and reliably helpful.”

We feel in these words, his apprehension, his existential fear, his depression. The depression of a father who cannot help his children. Hahnemann took a new path. What was important to him was a secure base, upon which healing would be possible with predictable certainty for the future.

And he finished his letter:

“The road is open. Every attentive, diligent and conscientious practitioner can take it freely. ... And the success? I would not trade the satisfaction I have achieved with this method for the most glorious goods on earth.”

In the preface to the individual remedies in the MMP (*Materia Medica Pura*), Hahnemann emphasises this aspect of certainty, based on which, it is known from now on, which morbid disorder can be healed with certainty by this remedy:

He writes about Gold (MMP, Vol. 4, p. 105):

“Poor, fabulous *Materia Medica* of the vulgar type, how far you remain from the revelation that the remedies, by their influence on healthy human beings, unequivocally, by arousing morbid symptoms, which the homeopathic practitioner can with certainty use for healing the natural illness, with infallible success!”

In the forward to the proving of *Chelidonium*, celandine, he turns his back to the Doctrine of Signatures (MMP, Vol. 4, p. 262):

“The importance of human health does not allow for such an uncertain classification of remedies ... only their pure symptoms can teach clearly where they can certainly heal.”

Or about the dandelion (MMP, Vol. 5, p. 167):

“The symptoms will have an even greater potential, that is to teach us in advance, in which morbid cases this plant juice will be and must be a certain, helpful remedy... .”

Digitalis (MMP, Vol. 4, p. 68) :

“Only the true homeopathic practitioner who chooses his remedies according to their pure ability to produce morbid effects which will heal a patient with very similar symptoms,

would never prescribe Foxglove except when it can help, will and must ... Thus must help!"

Chamomilla:

"Based on the symptoms and complaints that Chamomilla produces in healthy people, one can see which natural morbid disorders it can heal, will heal and must heal quickly, with certainty and permanently."

In the preface to MMP Volume 3:

"For the practising doctor there can be no knowledge more decisive than the healing tool, that is to know what each remedy is able to heal surely (p. 11) and tell us what certain help it brings for the disease (p. 9)."

In order to spare you from further citations, paragraphs 122, 143 and 147 in the Organon should be mentioned, in which Hahnemann clearly states his opinion. In the comment to §145 he says if we have enough remedy provings, "eventually the art of healing will approach mathematical science in terms of certainty." What is the situation like on modern remedy provings? While Hahnemann and his scholars who did the provings were aware that the description of the symptoms that arose during the provings were deviations from a healthy state, today's provers do not appear to be aware of this. The basic principle of homeopathy, to compare the similarity between the morbid symptoms of the diseased person (§6 ORG) and the morbid phenomena produced by the medicines in the healthy body (§21 ORG), no longer seems to be clear. This is why these days we are confronted with fabricated remedy provings, group meditation experiences that take place under the influence of a drug, or even during the pulverisation process, reactivation of the Doctrine of Signatures and finally symbolic Materia Medica. It just gets serious when all this finds its way into the repertory. We are experiencing a great break in tradition these days when it comes to understanding homeopathic symptoms. While it was natural for earlier generations of homeopaths to know what a symptom is, today it is not clear. R.v. Zandvoort, the author of the Complete Repertory, told me once, he only wanted to include a supplement in his repertory if it were already printed "black on white" in an homeopathic book or newspaper. Unfortunately, we can say this only holds true for literature from the first half of the 20th century. Thereafter, there is a lack of confidence in the entries because conditions in general that were matter of course back then are not so anymore.

On the one hand, the healthy prover suffered from the symptoms when proving remedies just as the patient suffered from his morbid symptoms. On the other hand, today many different feelings, ideas, associations and thoughts are described as "symptoms", which the "provers" experience day and night. For example, here is a proved symptom from prover no. 2 after taking Lac humanum C30:

"During a visualisation exercise in college I had the feeling that love is the key to everything, and when I look at various stations in my life, marriage was symbolised by children and picnics on blankets in the garden. As a symbol of my death, I saw myself burning at the stake, ready for reincarnation."

Prover no. 1 described the following symptoms also after taking Lac humanus C30:

"When I thought about the remedy, I saw myself in a field and a speckled frog came and went, then a spotted ladybird. And at night it was a warm fluffy animal, a sheep with a corresponding intellect. I see circles in words and outlines and baked a round cake today."

No wonder, when the same prover further noted the following symptom:

"I could not even eat half a chocolate biscuit, although I am normally crazy for them." On the other hand, she had "a craving for smarties at 10 o'clock in the evening."

Behold, Mr. Tinus Smits has already come up with an essence of the remedy (Homeopathic Links, Vol. 12, 5/99):

“The fundamental problem with this remedy is a lack of incarnation due to several profound causes, as in the fear of accepting this physical condition, fears about the difficulties during this incarnation, homesick for the astral world, non-acceptance of the child by the parents at the beginning of the pregnancy or fear of the responsibility for a new life etc. This lack of incarnation creates a deep ignorance regarding his own identity; the person is not in his centre and his energy is disturbed by the energy of other people and his surroundings.”

Here we see that the main concern is the conditions and processes lying behind the symptoms and not the description of the symptoms themselves. Hahnemann clearly rejects this in §144:

"Everything that is conjectural, all that is mere assertion or imaginary should be strictly excluded; everything should be the pure language of nature, carefully and honestly interrogated."

How far from Hahnemann's understanding of a reliable *Materia Medica* is today's supposed *Materia Medica*, on the periodic element system. Hahnemann says: "A fundamental principle for a homeopathic physician is that he does not prescribe a remedy for his patient whose effects on the healthy human being have not previously been carefully proven and thus made known to him" (footnote to §285).

Hahnemann also unmistakably expresses his opinion about how chemistry (as a science of the period system of elements) can provide information on pharmacology: "What does chemistry teach us about dead and mute medicinal substances? Answer: just their chemical meaning; it teaches us that they react in a certain way to chemical reagents ... this is of little interest to a physician. These designations do not reveal anything about what the plant or mineral, each to its characteristic, invisible inner virtual nature, may change in a person's health, specifically and any deviations, and yet complete healing is based on this! Only that medicinal substance which is found to have an apparent effect on a person, teaches the physician about the remedy's sphere of effectivity when it comes to the ability to heal ... so I hope that gradually people will be reasonable enough to see that chemistry's area of effectivity is only in separating chemical substances in the body, as well as combining substances ... that chemistry as a result is only able to give us information about chemical reactions but not about which mentally dynamic changes in a person's state of health are produced and not which medicinal and healing powers each particular drug possesses and produces in living organisms." (Investigation of the sources of the common *Materia Medica*", MMP, Vol. 3, Reprint, Haug Publishers, Heidelberg).

Even at the Liga congress in May 2000 in Budapest the provings of the remedies presented, described processes lying behind the symptoms: *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*, a Brazilian proving, carried out between 1993-98:

“Predominance of the left cerebral hemisphere, detrimental for the right cerebral hemisphere ... The remedy brings deep peace, simplicity, calmness in accepting incidents. It relaxes and brings the proper sleep, not action. It combines intuition and intellect and eases the synthesis (between the two). *Chrysanthemum* acts on both poles by an excessively vigilant condition as also by a condition of absolute mental confusion. Intuition and sensibility blossom in the structuralism of the left hemisphere and inhibits the creativity, the rhythm (Brazilian proving! Author's comment), the flexibility, which comes from the right half of the brain. The remedy reinstates the balance between the two hemispheres, creates a way out of old patterns, makes relaxation possible so that it is not necessary to explain so much, one can be less analytical and methodical.” (Quote from Programs and Abstracts, 55th Liga congress, Budapest).

C. Hering (archive for the homeopathic medicine healing, 1846, cited in Gypser, Hering's Medical Writings, Vol. 2, "The newer remedy provings", analysed by C. Hering, p. 906) criticises the work of the Austrian provers and tells them clearly: "Our task is to set reality against reality not imaginary against imaginary."

Now if the similarity principles on this level are applied to a real patient, then assumed processes are associated with the patient and used in a simile relationship with assumed processes associated with the remedy. It is clear that the main fundament of Hahnemann's medicine, that is certainty in healing, is completely disregarded. I myself belong to the generation of homeopaths who have learned to prescribe according to remedy descriptions.

That means we condense the proved symptoms for a remedy to a "fundamental" remedy description, something which lies underneath it, again like the "real" (like the orthodox medical term symptom, where the symptom is "only" an expression of the underlying "real" illness, which must "really" be treated) and to try to bring it into a simile relationship with something which lies behind the patient's symptoms, a picture, an essence, a central character etc. That means we have left the phenomenon level of symptoms, from the point of view of both the remedy and also the patient, and we are back to what 2500 years of occidental medical history also looked for: The real, the actual illness, which only expresses itself in symptoms, but really lies behind the symptoms.

Hahnemann did not take this path exactly, with his discovery of the fundamental similarity between an illness caused by a medicine and a natural illness -strictly on the symptom level. Today's homeopaths want to penetrate the "real" core, when we compare the patient's picture with the remedy pictures. It is therefore much more difficult these days, to introduce new remedy provings into the Materia Medica with success and to verify them therapeutically, because our view is fixed on remedy pictures. On the other hand, in 1873 Berridge (one of A. Lippe's students, who lived at a time when symptoms were still understood correctly) described a case from his practice in his "Complete Repertory of the Homeopathic Materia Medica on Diseases of the Eyes": A child drives his finger into his mother's left eye and scratches the upper part of the eyeball. Her eye hurts, feels hot, is red and there is a flow of hot tears. It is not possible to open her eye because of the pain. The use of cold water helps the pain and lachrymation. Sunlight makes lachrymation worse. Berridge takes the symptoms as they are and takes the modalities as qualitatively good symptoms:

Better from cold:

Feeling of heat

Lachrymation

Burning

Better from washing:

Heat

Lachrymation

Burning

Lachrymation - worse from light

... and ended up with Alumina. The pain and signs of inflammation disappeared within 15 minutes of one dose of Alumina CM (Fincke). This case cannot be solved using Kent's Repertorium in this way, because the relevant symptoms are not entered. This remedy is included under the first 10 remedies according to Bönninghausens Therapy Handbook, on the basis of the symptoms: better from cold and washing, worse from light, and lachrymation. Perhaps it would then have been possible to arrive at Alumina using the Materia Medica

comparison. This story from 1871 shows the strict method of proceeding according to symptoms used by the old homeopaths, without having to refer to remedy pictures or in this case to categories such as “injury remedies”. In particular, the fact that Berridges’s Eye Repertorium has not been included in modern repertories shows how much work must still take place so that the arduous achievements of the old homeopaths can be drawn upon again today. It also shows how much effort is wasted on entering insecure material, with which I mean modern material, following the spirit of the times into the Repertory. A manual should be enclosed with the modern Repertory, which pays reference to each author, who has added entries, and gives answers as to which author is reliable and which less.

About the same time as Hering’s anecdote described at the beginning, Ernst Stapf (Archive for homeopathic medicine, 2nd Volume, 1st Book, Leipzig 1823) healed a 41 year old woman, who had suffered from constant bleeding for a period of 5 months and already showed signs of anaemia: loss of weight, paleness, frequent fainting, swelling of legs, extreme exhaustion. Stapf manages to stop the bleeding within days and to restore this woman’s health after a 3 week therapy. Granted he gave her four different remedies within this period. He began with *Crocus sativus* C3 because of the striking feeling as if something alive was moving in her abdomen and with this remedy the bleeding improved instantly. Completely against the homeopathic rule to wait when an improvement takes place, Stapf had an infallible feeling for changes in symptomatology and he was confronted with the question whether the current symptoms were within the sphere of the remedy given or not? Four days after giving *Crocus*, Stapf found constant nausea to be the central problem which he knew could not be further healed by *Crocus* and gave *Ipecacuanha* C3. Five days later, extreme constipation and headache are new central symptoms, which disappear after taking *Nux vomica* C15. The rest of the ailments including the swelling of her legs were healed by a dose of *Ferrum chloratum* C2. I mention these cases because in our present day publications there is often a compulsion for just one remedy or rather cases are published which have been healed by prescribing one remedy. Today we experience, almost as the top criterion for good homeopathy, that the same remedy is given for years and acute illnesses can be healed with the remedy given for the chronic state. I do not wish to be misunderstood on this, when I have such a case in practice, I would gladly publish it, these ideal cases are welcome to us all. What I would like to point out is this different way of thinking of Hahnemann and his students: In order to heal diseases, the question for him was which of the patient’s characteristic symptoms corresponds most similarly with which remedy? When the symptoms change and no longer belong to the range of the remedy, the remedy was changed. It is often amazing to read these old cases and it constantly astounds me in which short time these old homeopaths could heal severe chronic diseases. Today when remedies are prescribed for the constitution or for a central core characteristic, there is something static that does not change so easily.

Another example is Bönninghausen’s famous healing of his ileus in the year 1833. Let us recall that Bönninghausen had only been familiar with homeopathy for five years! Bönninghausen saved himself from this acute situation by using *Thuja*. As a follow up treatment Hahnemann recommended *Lycopodium* and *Conium* but, because of Hahnemann’s bronchial illness, his written reply was delayed and Bönninghausen himself had in the meantime taken precisely these two remedies. The correspondence in thought between these two men is absolutely astounding. What we can learn from this is at least the alternative view that they had on medicines. It is not about constitution, about *Lycopodium* or *Thuja* types, or a *Conium* character, but simply about the symptoms of the medicine and not about the underlying character and essence of the medicine! I would like to compare these three cases from our old literature (Berridge, Stapf, Bönninghausen) with a report from a 1996 seminar (Homeopathic Links, Vol. 9, 3/96, p. 163) when Deborah Collins gave a seminar in New Zealand and presented two cases of women with chronic fatigue syndrome. Both women had

in common that they were led back to their former lives during regression hypnosis and it was discovered that both were gas victims as Jewish children in a concentration camp during World War II. This information led to the prescription of *Acidum hydrocyanicum*, cyanide, which healed them of their chronic ailments. The deadly poison from their past lives was now their healing agent. I do not want to comment on the reasoning behind the central symptom (exposure to cyanide gas during childhood), but would like to use it as an example for how far we have distanced ourselves from Hahnemann's idea. In the seminar report from New Zealand it states at the end that the speaker was given a standing ovation (which is very seldom in New Zealand), when she announced she would give another seminar there.

Certainty, on the other hand, which Hahnemann calls for as a prerequisite for healing results from the correct insight into the disease and the correct knowledge of the remedy's healing power. Uncertain remedy provings result in uncertain supplements to the repertories. For example, in a proving of *Uranium metallicum*, (Hans Eberle, Friedrich Ritzer, "Materia Medica, Healing of Diseases in modern life situations, New Homeopathic Remedies I"), it is noted that in the Uranus myth, Uranus, the personification of heaven, was castrated by his own son, Kronos. It is therefore no wonder when it is stated in this *Materia Medica* that:

"Area of affection: troubled man-women-relationship ... need for power ... inclination to opt out, wants to be free ... difficulty finding the right balance in intimacy and distance ... and, of course, under male genitals: fear of castration."

It is problematical when Alfons Geukens writes in a preface to this proving:

"The next step should be introduction of all these symptoms into our repertory, so that we think of this remedy also when we come across it during repertorisation, and so that we can confirm it using this *materia medica*."

By comparison the older repertory authors were very much so aware of Hahnemann's aspect of certainty in healing. Naturally, healing can only take place when the prerequisites - correct knowledge of the disease and correct knowledge of remedy action - are fulfilled. Therefore, Bönninghausen wrote in the preface to his *Therapeutical Handbook* in the year 1845:

"I notice that the same reasons which caused me to exclude *Osmium* and several other remedies, still continue to exist and that I do not like to mix reliable and proven remedies with doubtful and unreliable remedies."

The uncritical supplements of clinical symptoms from healed cases seem problematical to me. Hering says in the introduction to his "Analytical Repertory of the Symptoms of the Mind" expressively:

"We must be very conscious of the fact, that there are two types of symptoms: the ones produced during the proving and the healed ones, both are essentially different ... these different origins should be emphasised with great care in the *materia medica* monographs; it should also be looked at as a matter of highest importance, never to mix undifferentiated symptoms which have been reported as healed in a patient and those which have not been observed in a healthy person, with the symptoms which are produced by the remedy during the proving."

Why is this a matter of "highest importance" for Hering? Does it make any difference whether a symptom comes from a proving or from a healed case? The difference lies in the degree of certainty that this symptom shows in affiliation with the remedy. At any rate, a symptom produced in the proving belongs to the proved remedy more so and with greater certainty than a clinically healed symptom which could have disappeared more or less accidentally through the remedy's healing action. A symptom which arises during a proving and is verified in practice, obviously has the highest degree of certainty. Bönninghausen in

particular, tried to describe the importance of clinical verification in his Therapeutical Handbook based on the genius grade of the remedy.

As mentioned above, if associations, spontaneous thoughts and feelings instead of symptoms are described during modern provings of remedies, we are confronted with similar aspects when taking the case history. Lack of clarity about the composition of a symptom also prevails here, a lack of clarity which conflicts with Hahnemann's demand for knowledge of the "undoubted pathology" in §3. Correct knowledge of pathology is the prerequisite for certain healing. The state of illness is identical to the symptoms.

On the other hand, Dr. Klunker has pointed out in several articles in the magazine for Classical Homeopathy, that symptoms are privative existential phenomena. He refers hereby to Heidegger, who uses the term deprivation, lat. *privatio*, for illness. Just as health means unrestrained access to the possibilities of being, is being ill the symptom, "being deprived of", and thus means impairment of the unrestrained possibilities of being.

The discussion becomes heated when it comes to mind and mental symptoms. It goes without saying that any extraordinary mind and mental symptoms, the patient's mental state respectively, are leading symptoms when choosing a remedy. However, because homeopathy always relates to the patient's morbid symptoms (the simile relationship takes place between the morbid symptoms that the remedy produces and the patient's morbid symptoms), this also applies to mind and mental symptoms. A symptom is valid for all time: Belladonna which enlarged the pupils of Egyptian women 2000 years ago, will also do so today and in the future. The assessment of a patient's mind and mental state is on the other hand subject to many modern and cultural influences, is to be done more carefully and Hahnemann himself gives examples in §224 of things which influence a person's mental state without becoming symptoms themselves in the sense of being striking according to §153 of the Organon. Here he names errors in education, bad practices, corrupt morals, neglect of the mind, superstitions and ignorance. What must be distinguished from these is the altered state of mind during the illness, which solely determines the remedy choice. The altered mental state during illness represents a peculiarity which is the most apparent, amongst all symptoms that the meticulous practitioner can observe. This means that this emotional state remains least hidden and the homeopathic practitioner does not need a long psychotherapeutical training in order to recognise it. What is needed, however, is the ability to recognise reality in order to be able to be clearly aware of one's own projections.

Today many homeopathic schools of thought which have been established interpret what "in particular is to be healed" in a patient (knowledge of disease, §3) in a completely different manner. The main point of discussion is still whether or not there is a morbid inner state etc. behind the "superficial" symptoms, which should be treated as the "real" illness. The simile relationship is constructed from this morbid inner state (whereby it is irrelevant whether it is founded in the psyche or a miasma or previous incarnation) i.e. the symptoms from this (supposed) morbid centre have already been seen in the case history or been selected for the choice of remedy.

Hahnemann himself gives the instruction in §153, to look for leading symptoms amongst those more striking and characteristic. As this has never been defined in greater detail, it seems to depend upon the subjectivity of the practitioner taking the case history. Everybody sees something else as being particularly striking, which brings us back to our example from the beginning. 200 years of homeopathic history have shown that homeopathy's peculiar weakness lies in its defence. Homeopathy never stood on its own feet after Hahnemann's time, rather was substantiated by the dominating spirit of the times. The critical school of scientific thought justified homeopathy on the basis of the emerging science of pharmacology at that time, then came the constitution period, followed by psychoanalysis and

anthroposophy, and later still by psychology and psychosomatic medicine respectively. Today the spirit of the times is turning to new psychotherapy models like family positioning. All these trends influence our homeopathic thoughts and block our way to comprehending simple disease and medicine knowledge as a prerequisite for certain healing as Hahnemann conceived it. Why is the question of certainty in healing so important? In fact, because it represents the main principle of homeopathy! All of homeopathy is built up on this basis. The Law of Similarity makes it possible to transpose certainty of healing as a healing art into practice. That means that the Law of Similarity helps to put this certainty of healing into practice. If we separate the Law of Similarity from the principle of certainty in healing, then the similarity can refer to everything and not just to the level of symptoms. It is then that the Doctrine of Signatures can come back into play and the patient will be given Apis because she has a waspish waist or a snake remedy because she has a liking for rings in the form of a snake. A Law of Similarity which is separated from certainty of healing can then refer to all possible things and is open for free association, for every notion a homeopath may have. The French cultural philosopher Alain Finkielkraut made the point that:

“We are living in the age of feelings, there is no truth and no lie, no stereotype and no notion, no beauty and no ugliness anymore, just an unending range of different and similar pleasures. Democracy, that wanted to bring culture to everybody, defines itself now as the right for everyone to have the culture he chooses (or the right to name his current cultural inclinations). Let me do as I please.” (Quoted by H. Glaser, *Contentment in Culture*, Universitas, 9/1991, p. 837)

What is pointed out here about our culture is also true for homeopathy. In no other generation of homeopaths were there so many different approaches to the interpretation of patients and medicines, carried by a subjective arbitrariness which is today called creativity. One can say imagination is substantially more thrilling than reality. I would once again like to start out at Hahnemann's revolutionary concept. We have learned one side of this method, the prerequisite: with a correct knowledge of the disease and a correct knowledge of the medicine, after a correct adaptation using the principle of similarity, healing must result. Naturally, manipulation, changing of the symptoms, supporting self-healing processes, all this is possible with different therapeutical techniques, but true healing takes place using the principle of similarity. When the prerequisites are fulfilled and a healing cure is expected as a certain result but does not occur, this failure does not mean that the principle has been violated in practice. Just as we do not question the law of electronics when we build a radio and upon pressing the button, the music cannot be heard. The law of electricity is not at fault, rather myself as I have made a mistake in my construction. Homeopathy is, when it comes to healing, based on the concrete individual case. I know in advance for which concrete illness I can use this remedy, by means of the correct knowledge of the remedy's action. The knowledge of illness refers individually to “every individual case of disease” (§3 and the certainty of healing does not mean that every patient can be certainly healed. Every one of us knows the trap in practice, the difficulty with which we are confronted daily. Remedy symptoms produced during provings are the result of the prover's subjective feelings and disease symptoms are also experienced subjectively by the patient. The correct perception on the part of the practitioner is dependent upon the patient's ability to express himself and the practitioner's ability to understand. Furthermore, the practitioner needs the right tools (Repertory and Materia Medica) in order to be able to adapt the symptoms according to the Law of Similarity. These facts indicate some of the difficulties which the practitioner faces. The difficulties which we are confronted with daily in practice, where we are by no means sure that healing is certain, when we prescribe a remedy, these difficulties hamper us, obstruct our view of Hahnemann's healing method with its principle of healing certainty. We must understand Hahnemann's basic concept, especially because we experience difficulties with

our patients in practice!

Practicing is difficult enough, we must not make knowledge of disease and remedies harder or make healing certainty impossible, by the misunderstandings and likelihood of errors described above.

First of all this principle of certainty of healing and the necessary prerequisite should be clear to us - we should go back with our recollection to Hahnemann and his students. From this basis we can - free from all Zeitgeist ideas - dedicate ourselves to our very own scientific task: undertaking remedy provings and verification of proving symptoms in practice. True progress is only possible on this basis.

Text includes bibliography.

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