

This letter to the editor first appeared in 'Simillimum' (Vol.13, No. 4, Winter 2001, p. 5-6), the Journal of the Homeopathic Academy of Naturopathic Physicians (www.healthy.net/library/journals/simillimum) edited by Barbara Osawa and Peter Wright. It is presented here with kind permission.

In this anonymous letter the importance of a given cultural background for the expression of a particular mental state as well as for the understanding of symbols and their interpretation in homoeopathy is described. Following Hahnemann it is not essential to know why someone is in a special mental state but how this state expresses itself through symptoms. Furthermore the warning is given not to use the doctrine of signatures for prediction.

Anonym

Letter to the editor

Dear editor,

I would like to comment about your position on (and statements about) symbolism. I have read Dr. Sankaran's works — which I personally think are brilliant genius — and sometimes I get lost, due to the references to Indian mythology, of which I am totally ignorant. This does not make Dr. Sankaran right or wrong. Likewise, I have seen references to, or descriptions of professions suited to a remedy type. As any homeopath worth his/her "Nat-mur" knows, this is because the profession is a reflection or manifestation of the personality — the mental and emotional state — of the individual.

However, as I have seen noted, in different societies, different jobs will express the same remedy. Or, better put, in comparing two different cultures, a profession in one culture will express a particular remedy mindset, while the same profession will not express that mindset in another culture. My culture and ethnicity is very different from any homeopath that I have met so far. As such, my understanding of symbols is very different from the references of those I went to school with, teachers, colleagues, etc., and of your columnists, authors, and case presenters. ...I can feel the culture gap. If the "dream analysis" is sufficiently interpretive, the case presenter is on the other side of the cultural divide, and I just don't see it.

These issues of cultural opinion and subjectivity are things I do not discuss in public often, or in depth. They bring out intolerance in teachers and, especially, in colleagues. Detailed examples are not necessary on my part. Because of this intolerance, I prefer that you withhold my name if you wish to publish this letter (to which I have no objection). Your readership should be aware that I have written to the journal in the past. You have published some of my comments, and some comments were rightfully not published as they dealt with internal operations.

What has always struck me as the pinnacle of Hahnemannian Homeopathy is the "unprejudiced observer" (the objective observer, as applied to psychoanalysis); the What, not the How. Hahnemannian homeopaths do not psychoanalyze as to why someone is an Aurum or Arsenicum state or mindset. It is enough to know that the client is in that state. The mentals are no different than the physicals. We do not need to know about microbes or other internal causes. We need to know about external causes and symptoms — the state — and recommend the remedies accordingly. Dr. Ortega, in his book on Chronic Miasms, puts it very well. As some of my teachers have put it, and to adapt Dr. Sankaran's view, the history of what caused the mindset is not as important as identifying the current state. That is "what is to be healed" in the client.

In addition, the doctrine of signatures makes terrific 20/20 hindsight, but not foresight. Clearly, extrapolating from the conjectures already drawn, would come up with obviously incorrect conclusions.

Again, thanks for considering the letter. This letter may give some food for thought. It is similar to a mild statement, about suppression by psychotherapy causing deeper diseases, that got a flaming reaction. But isn't that what Hahnemann discusses in the Organon about mental diseases?

By the way, the article on plasmodium malaria drives home a powerful point!

Sincerely,

Anonymous