

This article first appeared in Homeopathy Today (2000, Vol 20, December: 5-6), the newsletter of the National Center for Homeopathy, Alexandria, VA, USA, (www.homeopathic.org) edited by Julian Winston. It is presented here with kind permission.

This article was the take-off point for the current debate about purity of sources in homeopathy. The editor questioned if some of the current practices (meditation provings, periodic table work, etc.) should be subsumed under the heading "homeopathy" or are they unproven practices being done by those who call themselves "homeopaths."

Julian Winston

From the editor

A time to reflect

December 2000 ... in a month we will certainly be into the new century. As we leave this year, I have brought together a number of pieces that all speak to similar issues. What is homeopathy? Where is it going?

I have just returned from the best seminar I have attended in ages - presented by George Dimitriadis of Sydney, Australia. It was an exploration of the method of Bönninghausen (1785 - 1864) acclaimed by many as one of the best practitioners of homeopathy to date. It brought homeopathy out of the stratosphere and back to the basics outlined by Hahnemann in the *Organon*. A report on the seminar (and the method) will follow in *HT* early next year. For now let us look back at the year and forward to the new century and cogitate upon the meaning of homeopathy.

But is it homeopathy?

In recent issues of *HT* I have spoken (rather strongly some say) about "pseudo-homeopathy" and the problem of trying to subsume all "alternative" therapies under the banner of "homeopathy." I would now like to look at this from the "other side" as it were.

I began to think about these issues as I sat talking to Dr. Klaus-Henning Gypser over a period of ten days in Germany in late March [see article in November *HAT*]. We discussed all things homeopathic, and he shared with me some of the cases he saw in his busy daily practice. The one thing I noticed was his complete reliance on the symptoms of the patient and matching those symptoms to the provings in the materia medica.

I did not hear him refer to a patient as a "*Sulphur*" or a "*Lycopodium*" (or any other remedy, for that matter) once.

The seeing of homeopathic remedies (or the people who may need them) as "pictures" or caricatures - the "ragged philosopher" as *Sulphur* or the man with the "gold headed cane" as *Arsenicum*, for example - came into use rather early. Hahnemann talked about some general behaviors associated with remedies - the mildness of *Pulsatilla*, the anger of *Nux vomica* - as did Hering. The earliest "pictures" seemed to come into the literature at the end of the last century and were popularized by Kent - whose students found them a good way to "fix" the remedies in their minds. Many of his students wrote about using these as "shortcuts" to finding a curative remedy for the patient.

Then, in the 1940s and 50s, Edward Whitmont, a Jungian psychiatrist and homeopath, began to explore the "images" of the remedies in a very Jungian (how else?) way. A number of the dwindling American homeopaths became very interested in this approach. Some (Elizabeth

Wright Hubbard among them) were also interested in the Anthroposophy of Rudolph Steiner - which infused into their homeopathy a very spiritual level of seeing, while others (Grimmer and Gladdish) were followers of Emmanuel Swedenborg - whose philosophy put its own "spin" on things homeopathic.

In 1974, George Vithoulkas of Greece made his entrance to the U.S. and brought with him his "essence" approach which was (in the view of many) misunderstood and often misapplied by his students in an effort to make homeopathy easier to understand and do.

A number of the European homeopaths like Jost Künzli, spoke out against this "surface" treatment (as noted in *The Faces of Homeopathy*, page 362), but the "run for the gurus" had started.

Vithoulkas did not spend much time discussing philosophy or the *Organon* in his in-person lectures. His presentations were primarily about materia medica and clinical cases - and thus set the trend for the seminars we see now.

Many others (some students of Vithoulkas, some not) began to explore further the "edges" of homeopathy. We now have Sankaran discussing "core delusion", Scholten discussing the periodic table of chemistry with its rows and groups, Herrick with her anthropomorphizing animals and dinosaur bones, and the rush to understand the remedy "families" and "kingdoms" - all leading to the possible prescribing of a remedy based on speculation and theory.

You could say that such prescribing has a long history. There have always been "hunches" which led to cures and then led to further investigations. It is part of the whole.

But some who consider themselves "classical" homeopaths (who may eschew the "pseudo-homeopathy" of combination remedies, EAV machines, radionics, sequential therapy, layer theory, etc.) often forget or don't see that there is another side to this - the mirror of it. This includes the overpsychologizing of cases, the dream provings, the meditative provings, and all the rest - and *this isn't homeopathy either!*

All of Scholten's work, no matter how interesting and no matter how useful, is *not*, at this point, homeopathy because we have no provings - only some clinical data. Not that it isn't important. But it should be kept within its context.

As Joel Shepperd, MD, points out in this issue [page 30, Goethe said, "Theory is usually the product of the impatient intellect, of the desire to get rid of the phenomena." We should step gently around these new ideas in homeopathy and accept them all with a large grain of salt.

I asked Dr. Gypser about the spate of new and unusual provings and the idea that environmental conditions have changed since Hahnemann's time and people are more sensitive, so such new remedies are needed. He shrugged. He has a busy practice. He achieves deep and lasting cures. He mostly uses the remedies available to Bönninghausen in 1864 - approximately 95% of the time in his practice. The other 5% of the time he uses remedies proved from 1860-1900.

Unfortunately, we do *not* have an alternate universe machine so we can't see if Gypser's case-taking and selection of a remedy would be of help in the cases where Jeremy Sherr gave the new remedies *Salmon* or *Diamond*.

But it is food for thought.

Julian Winston, Editor