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As co-editor of Simillimum Peter Wright sums up and comments on the actual situation of the debate and explains the point of view of the editors of Simillimum. He takes up the article of Moskowitz critically, and furthermore he comments critically on the article "Defining a Different Tradition for Homeopathy" of Jörg Wichmann that had been published in winter 2001 in the journal Homeopathic Links. Finally he emphasizes that even a partial abandonment of the fundamental principles of the homeopathy of Hahnemann will lead to the loss of the possibility that the hereof resulting therapeutic system will be accepted as a useful part of the present health system.

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## **TOWARD CLARITY**

The past year has seen the public eruption of a controversy that had been quietly simmering in the homeopathic community for some time. This conflict has important implications for Simillimum, for the HANP's role in hosting case conferences, and for the homeopathic training of naturopathic doctors. But its implications for Homeopathy are much larger than these relatively parochial concerns, and deserve the attention of all of us who are committed to the health and survival of the art. Our intention here is to comment on the exchange to date, and to clarify our position and the role we see for Simillimum as the debate proceeds.

Julian Winston, distinguished homeopathic historian and longtime editor of the National Center for Homeopathy's monthly publication Homeopathy Today (HT), had publicly questioned certain ideas advanced by many of the popular teachers and authors in the field. Twenty-one of these individuals, in turn, called for his resignation in a letter to HT titled "Against Divisiveness."

In our Fall 2001 issue, we published a lengthy article in response to that letter by Dr. André Saine ("Homeopathy vs. Speculative Medicine," Simillimum, Fall 2001) which was too long for HT to print in full. This piece in turn prompted a reply by Dr. Roger Morrison, who has unfortunately refused permission to have his letter republished in these pages. Meanwhile, Dr. Saine has written a long reply to that letter, a highly abbreviated version of which appears in this issue. The full text will be posted on his website at [www.homeopathy.ca/articles.html](http://www.homeopathy.ca/articles.html).

We also received a vitriolic piece from Dr. Richard Moskowitz that took Dr. Saine's Simillimum article as a starting point. Unfortunately, Dr. Moskowitz insisted that it either be published in full and without changes, or not at all. I have chosen the latter course, but will respond to the substance of his points here anyway. His article will be posted on our website at [www.healthy.net/hanp/controversy.htm](http://www.healthy.net/hanp/controversy.htm).

We are looking for more light in this exchange, rather than additional heat, and will insist that all parties who desire access to our pages stick to the issues, and address their colleagues civilly. To those who wish to take a constructive part in this vital discussion, I would like to recommend a book called Nonviolent Communication, by Marshall Rosenberg (Encinitas, California: PuddleDancer Press, 2000), as a valuable resource. The novelist Ishmael Reed said "writin' is fightin'," but we would hope for a kinder spirit in a discussion among healers.

As we have been preparing this issue, a couple of articles in the Winter 2001 issue of Homeopathic Links that appear very relevant to this discussion caught my eye, and I will also

touch on the ideas advanced there. The striking similarity between my thoughts here and Julian Winston's comments in the forthcoming issue of *Homeopathy Today* is an example of the adage, "Great minds think alike, fools rarely differ," rather than a coordinated attack.

Finally, I will once again attempt to concisely formulate the principles which guide our editorial policy, and which we believe must constitute the common ground for further dialog.

### **Moskowitz vs. Saine**

I was distressed by the article Dr. Moskowitz sent. In declining to publish it, we may be open to charges of unfairness for airing only one side of the debate. If printed as submitted, however, it might be well be more damaging than helpful to the writer's position, a point that I noted our correspondence. I apologize to the reader for another instance of responding to a text that is not included along with the reply, but we reluctantly decided that we could not accept his article with the accompanying ultimatum to publish it unaltered.

Dr. Saine's follow-up article is included here only because he was willing to let us edit it extensively. In our correspondence, what came through to me was his sense that Dr. Saine's strong words in "Homeopathy versus Speculative Medicine" deserved an even more strident response. While there are overtones of religiosity in André's statement - a rather familiar flavor from Hahnemann's writings - Dr. Moskowitz casts the situation in terms of outright sectarian conflict, with multiple terms alluding to violence. In a world where literal terrorism continues to inflict real injury and death, employing such rhetoric for what is ostensibly a principled disagreement among professional healers is offensive.

Dr. Moskowitz implies that his core sense of himself is as "a rebel and heretic." This seems understandable in the context of his own story. As a young medical doctor during the early 1970s, his bold commitment to Homeopathy, at a time when the art had nearly vanished, demonstrated extraordinary independence, dedication, and courage.

But his use in the article of terms like "excommunication," "fatwa," "hatchet job," "witch hunt," "inquisitors," "killing and dying," suggests a siege mentality, and represents a level of verbal escalation that goes far beyond the provocation of André's piece. Other language from the article that we would prefer not to include in *Simillimum* is condescending, even contemptuous: "schtick," "conceits," "cheap shots," "demimonde of young seekers," "prurient interest," etc.

Curiously, Dr. Moskowitz's description of the Kent-Whitmont- Vithoukas-Coulter-Sankaran-Scholten lineage, for which he expresses such pride, as "Illuminist" (a term that other writers have used derisively for Kent's work) seems to indicate his acceptance of Dr. Saine's description of contemporary exponents of the school as "illuminated gurus." One doubts that most of the teachers he mentions would welcome either label.

Dr. Moskowitz refers to the "laborious and difficult yoga of detailed materia medica study," the "hard-won mastery of remedies in the good old-fashioned way," as an essential prerequisite for those incline to embrace the popular teachings at issue here. While this discipline undoubtedly characterized his own early training as a homeopath, it can no longer be "presupposed" in the present era, when software vendors promise "every thing you need to become a great homeopath" through simply purchasing an expensive computer program, and where students can be certified as "master clinicians" after a course of weekend seminars. The core materia medica - a few hundred reliably proven medicines, at best - has not been notably expanded by the very uneven provings of the last decade, yet students are encouraged to choose their prescriptions from among thousands of medicines through computer-aided "group analysis" and inferences from signatures. The intellect is overwhelmed, while the imagination is given free reign.

The giant step in remedy analysis that Dr. Moskowitz describes, moving from dry lists of confirmed symptoms to “weav[ing] the rubrics together into a composite human being,” is a risky interpretive leap that invites speculation into the mix, even for a master like Kent. The overemphasis on mental symptoms in both case analysis and provings has long been a source of concern to Hahnemannian critics of the so-called Illuminists. Dr. Moskowitz’s description of their “rightly object[ing] to students memorizing condensed and highly mentalized versions of the remedies in lieu of more detailed study” sums up these concerns well and appears to give them credence, despite his objections to Dr. Saine’s criticisms. For all of Dr. Moskowitz’s efforts to explain the appeal he finds in the popular teachings, I found it hard to see that the lure of the Illuminist approach amounts to much more than its convenient provision of “condensed and highly mentalized versions of the remedies.” Although he states that Sankaran “never suggests or implies that these analyses are a basis for prescribing,” a reading of cases in current homeopathic journals, including many cases submitted to Simillimum, demonstrates that they are in fact being widely used for precisely that purpose, rather than merely as “teaching aids,” as he suggests.

The idea that patients and medicines can be reduced to one- or two-sentence psychological snapshots, based on a fragmentary proving or a location on the periodic table of elements - said to be a highly accurate tool in the hands of master prescribers - can only lead to disappointment for most of us, as Dr. Moskowitz appears to concede. Yet this reductionism, offering one-dimensional “essences” in place of the tangled complexity of accurate symptomatology, is very the heart of the “new teachings.” In defending these teachings as genuinely Hahnemannian innovations, he notes that the prevalent deviations from principled Homeopathy that prompted the formation of the IHA were not the same as the currently popular approaches which have provoked criticism from Saine, Winston, and others.

This is hardly surprising, since the psychologizing tendency so prevalent among the more affluent segments of contemporary global Euro- American culture is a relatively recent development. The danger in the previous era came from the allure of “modern science” and the associated innovations in allopathic diagnostic and therapeutic approaches. But insofar as the current “innovations” simply recycle old concepts like the doctrine of signatures and group analysis through chemical or phylogenetic inferences, today’s Hahnemannians can easily find passages in the founder’s writings that directly address these ideas in current teachings.

On the one hand, Dr. Moskowitz goes very far towards acknowledging the dangers posed by these teachings, particularly for students. On the other, this reader can only feel bewildered by his statement that, as far as the potential for leading students into “misuse,” “Hahnemann would be by far the worst offender of all.” He seems to turn right around, at one point, and admit that the very wide-open contemporary eclecticism that he has been defending is essentially a Babel of confusion, a chaotic hall of mirrors; this abrupt reversal leaves us with a kind of intellectual whiplash. He calls for “easily identifiable standards, like those prevailing in the scientific world at large.” Yet Hahnemann provided prescribers with just such standards, and in view of the tremendous value they have demonstrated over the last two centuries, why should they be abandoned?

Readers who remain unconvinced of the reliability of Illuminist Homeopathy are likely to find the remarks of the school’s critics quoted by Dr. Moskowitz, including Vithoukas, and Drs. Jacobs, Crothers, and Kunzli, very resonant in undercutting his major theses. Yet, although he concedes the validity of many of the critics’ objections, and calls for “full and open debate,” one can hardly forget that the present exchange started off with the demand by the 21 for Mr. Winston’s firing, due his audacity in questioning their views.

It is a measure of the special offense that Dr. Moskowitz appears to have taken from André’s

article, perhaps, that he diverges so much into responding instead to other critics for whom he seems to feel greater respect, particularly his mentor, George Vithoulkas. The “paradox” he points out in connection with Kunzli’s criticism of Vithoulkas, and the latter’s recent criticism of Scholten and Sankaran, is hardly perplexing as both criticisms, in the view of this observer, are sound.

### **The road to nowhere**

That Hahnemann vilified those whom he felt misconstrued and misused Homeopathy can hardly be news to readers of the *Organon*! It seems that the Illuminists wish to embrace Hahnemann the bold experimenter, while discounting Hahnemann the harsh critic of those who disregard his methods and yet claim to be homeopaths. I would argue that these apparently contrasting faces are the two sides of a single precious coin. While we can sympathize with those who are put off by his righteous wrath, it was exactly that crusty integrity that steered his explorations away from the logical and procedural errors of other would-be medical innovators. In other words, the outstanding quality of his contributions to medicine was very closely linked to his fierce refusal to compromise the truth. When we try to model our work on the creative innovator, while ignoring the troublesome iconoclast, our results can never approach the high standards he upheld.

A glimpse of where current trends seem to be heading may be evident in Jorg Wichman’s article, “Defining a Different Tradition for Homeopathy” (*Links*, Winter 2001). Homeopathy, like other medical disciplines, is customarily defined as both art and science. As hard as it may be to connect it with contemporary physics, chemistry, and pharmacology, Hahnemann’s thinking is strikingly superior in clarity, logic, and rigor compared to that of other medical theorists of his day, and continues to offer an audacious challenge to the assumptions of contemporary conventional medicine. Richard Grossinger’s description of Homeopathy in *Planet Medicine* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1980, p. 161) as “the medicine of an unknown science” is apt.

Wichman, however, expresses no qualms about simply abandoning the scientific aspect altogether. In his view Homeopathy is not the harbinger of a possible future science, but rather a branch of the hermetic tradition, like alchemy and shamanism. (He stops short of mentioning hermeticism’s other offshoots, such as astrology, necromancy, and ceremonial magic!) He suggests that, instead of struggling for a niche in the science-oriented mainstream of modern life, we would do better to “come out of the closet” as occultists and witches, and insist on our rights to practice a suppressed minority cult. Perhaps practitioners who describe themselves as “Illuminists” will find this scenario attractive.

The preceding article in the same issue of *Links* would appear to bolster his conclusions. José Waizel-Bucay, in his piece “A Chapter in the History of Therapeutics: the Affinity Principle,” provides a brief historical account of the doctrine of similars. Although he mentions Hahnemann in passing, he is apparently either unaware that Homeopathy’s discoverer explicitly discarded that doctrine as false and incompatible with Homeopathy, or else intentionally omitting this information. Ignoring Hahnemann’s repeated insistence that only accurate information derived from careful provings can provide a reliable basis for treating the sick, he suggests that in a universe offering countless possible medicines, we may as well go ahead and guess about their properties, guided by physical appearances, habits, and behaviors. He thus promotes exactly the same dubious procedures that Hahnemann denounced so eloquently, the same ancient superstitions that he intended Homeopathy to replace and bury for good.

What consequences can we expect from ignoring Hahnemann’s valiant efforts to create a precise and scientific approach to cure? Divorced from the full array of his principles,

shrugging off the rigor he demanded, the resulting system abdicates any possibility of recognition as a viable part of contemporary health care, and joins the shadow world of the occult arts. The losers can only be the large majority of our potential patients, who will naturally shun a healing method that represents itself in such a manner, as well as many health care practitioners and payers who might otherwise be interested in Homeopathy as a systematic, comprehensive, and cost-effective alternative to standard medicine.

### **Affirming the essentials**

Like the impulse to follow the creative Hahnemann while dismissing the unpleasantly strict one, most attempts at innovation depend on emphasizing only certain principles of Homeopathy, rather than working with the entire interlocking set. Jorg Wichman describes the three major pillars of Homeopathy as “the law of similars, the potentization of remedies, and the working of the life force or dynamis.” (Most Illuminists also observe the principle of the single remedy.) This list is correct as far as it goes, but incomplete. The principles evolved together as an inductive system, starting from the emergence of the law of similars from Hahnemann’s experiment with Peruvian bark, and culminating in Hering’s observations regarding the direction of cure. The integrity of this system, like that of its discoverer’s character, must be understood and practiced as a unitary whole if one seeks the results it can offer as an intact system.

We will define the principles, then, as

- the law of similars, the relationship between the patient and the curative medicine
- the vital force, the entity that is the source of susceptibility and symptoms, and that responds to treatment through cure, palliation, or suppression
- seeking the cause, exciting, maintaining, or fundamental
- miasms, the ultimate fundamental cause
- determining medicinal properties of substances through accurate provings on healthy people
- the single medicine, prescribed as it was proven
- potentization
- minimum dose

If all of our materia medica information was somehow lost, the essential structure of Homeopathy could be reconstructed from these principles. When parts of this framework are ignored, or other contradictory elements are added to the mix, the integrity of the structure is threatened.

We welcome discussion of any topic relevant to Homeopathy in these pages. We wish, however, to stay within the full, intact structure of the discipline as described above, since its reliability in that form has been amply proven. We will try to eliminate demeaning or violent language from this journal, despite any author’s claims to either purity or illumination. We hope, most of all, to emulate the old maxim that “showing” is to be valued over “telling.” Reference to authorities and logical arguments have their place, but solid case work, demonstrating sustained results with real people “on easily comprehensible principles,” is the ultimate standard.

### **Commentary of the german translator (Friedrich Dellmour):**

It has been alarming, that the objective criticisms of questionable teachings led to the demand of a majority of colleagues for the demission of the critic. This contribution

demonstrates the shocking dimension of a suppressed conflict: if the essential principles of homeopathy become a matter of democratic decisions and by that new doctrines are added, which are contradictory to the existing teaching, entire homeopathy is threatened.

Peter Wright makes the schism clear. However, homeopathy is not splitted – but the schism appears in the heads of our colleagues. One go with Hahnemann, who has discovered homeopathy as a scientific and precise method of holistic medicine and has left clearly defined principles for practice. The other introduce interpretations and speculations into homeopathy and account homeopathy as an “art”, to present even ancient philosophies, mysticism and occultism as “hermetic traditions” being the fundamentals of homeopathy.

The controversy of homeopathy appears as an expression of the spirit of the age and an external sign of the inner splitting of the colleagues. Many of them have left the roots of homeopathy (science, medicine) and now newly define homeopathy, using their own world view (philosophy, spirituality) as the new fundament. This development is an act of violence against the approved principles of homeopathy. If this destructive trend is not stopped, this will be the end of reliable homeopathy.