

Translation by Judith Widderich

This commentary, based on an interview between Neil Tessler and Divya Chhabra, includes several quotations from Samuel Hahnemann's works, which give proof of the fact that the fundamental principles of homeopathy are not sufficiently taken into account in innovative homeopathy.

Samuel Hahnemann's reply to Divya Chhabra

Critical comments on Neil Tessler's interview with Divya Chhabra (1)

In the course of this interview, Divya Chhabra touched on some central aspects of so-called innovative homeopathy, for example: *the necessity to innovate homeopathy, the application of unproved substances, "modern" drug provings, "free association" in case-taking, the importance of signatures, and the study of a patient's "inner state"*.

While reading I asked myself: How would Hahnemann have commented this interview? As an incentive to personal thoughts, I have picked some suitable quotes from his works, for those of you, who have followed this debate on fundamental principles.

When Neil Tessler wrote down his comments on this interview, he referred to it as "a strong statement of the innovative community that can be regarded as a manifesto of modern practice".

Divya Chhabra emphasizes, not to stop where Hahnemann stopped, but to go forward as he always went forward. Innovations were often rejected because of the fear of changes; to criticise or discard an innovation without having used it would be harmful for homeopathy.

Is innovation necessary in homeopathy?

In the preface to the sixth edition of the Organon (2) it says:

Thus homoeopathy is a perfectly simple system of medicine, remaining always fixed in its principles as in its practice, which, like the doctrine whereon it is based, if rightly apprehended will be found to be complete (and therefore serviceable). What is clearly pure in doctrine and practice should be self-evident, and all backward sliding to pernicious routinism of the old school that is much its antithesis as night is to day, should cease to vaunt itself with the honorable name of Homoeopathy.

He writes in "Nota bene for my Reviewers" (3):

This doctrine appeals not only chiefly, but solely to the verdict of experience - ,repeat the experiments', it cries aloud, ,repeat them carefully and accurately, and you will find the doctrine confirmed at every step' - and it does what no medical doctrine, no system of physics, no so-called therapeutics ever did or could do, it *insists* upon being ,judged by the result'. (Underlining emphasizes passages by the author).

According to this, innovation ("renewal") is something completely strange to Hahnemann's homeopathy. Samuel Hahnemann discovered a law of nature and described the fundamental principles of homeopathy in the first edition of the Organon. Later editions show no substantial revisions of these fundamental principles. Even the introduction of the miasma concept from the fourth edition onward, did not lead to any elementary changes of the fundamental principles. It was only a matter of taking a principle used in treating acute miasmas, which was already known prior to the publication of the Organon's first edition, and applying it to the treatment of chronic miasmas. Homeopathy cannot be rediscovered, it

cannot be extended in principle by new knowledge or notions. Fundamental principles such as the simile principle, in particular the restriction to direct experience of the senses in studying drugs and diseases, as well as the absolute restraint not to go beyond this and “look in depth”, are incontestable principles in homeopathy. Everyone is free to call these fundamental principles of homeopathy in question and to use other methods of attaining knowledge as pure empiricism, yet the resulting method cannot carry the name of homeopathy. The fundamental principles are established and forever valid in homeopathy.

Continued development of homeopathy is only possible based on its principles. For everyone who is familiar with the principles of homeopathy, it is clear that respect for these principles is lacking in “innovative homeopathy”. A further discussion of this follows below.

Divya Chhabra expressed herself as follows on the subject of *application of unproven drugs*:

I feel that provings are the foundation of homeopathy and we do not and should not forget it at any point. The effort should constantly be, from all sources, to prove the remedies in the best possible way, in a complete way. However, the reality of the situation is that even if all of us are working at this moment to prove remedies, it is still not enough.

The way the world has changed and is changing, requires so many times the use of remedies where you know, because you know your materia medica, you know your repertory, you've read through books, you have enough of confidence in the knowledge of your own ability to have seen what exists, to know that there are patients who come which are beyond that. So what do you do? Do you just sit back and say, I'm not going to give a remedy until that remedy is proved or should you use other methods, tools, which you have understood through well-proved remedies?

...So the foundation is your materia medica and your knowledge. First you should be sure you know that. Once you have climbed that and you are sure, if that is not enough, then you should be ready to stop and fly off. Then you fly off knowing that your feet are on the ground, you don't fly because you didn't know the foundation. Its not like I just want to build a tenth story of the building. I have built nine stories. Now I can take that freedom to take that leap, knowing I have gone beyond the point of knowing what was already existing in the materia medica.

In the preface to the sixth Organon edition (4), Hahnemann makes it perfectly clear what he thinks about the above mentioned points:

Hence Homeopathy....employs for the cure ONLY those medicines whose power for altering and deranging (dynamically) the health it knows *accurately*...

In §119 Organon, footnote 2 (5) he writes:

If this be pure truth, as it undoubtedly is, then no physician who would not be regarded as devoid of reason, and who would not act contrary to the dictates of his conscience, the sole arbiter of real worth, can employ in the treatment of diseases any medicinal substance but one with whose real significance he is thoroughly and perfectly conversant, i.e., whose positive action on the health of healthy individuals he has accurately tested that he knows for certain that it is capable of producing a very similar morbid state, more similar than any other medicine with which he is perfectly acquainted, to that presented by the case of disease he intends to cure by means of it;...

§144 (6):

From such materia medica 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.

§145 (7):

Of a truth it is only by a very considerable store of medicines accurately known in respect of these their pure modes of action in altering the health of man that we can be placed in a position to discover a homoeopathic remedy, a suitable artificial (curative) morbid analogue for *each* of the infinitely numerous morbid states in nature, for *every* malady in the world*.

*At first, about forty years ago, I was the only person who made the proving of the pure powers of medicines the most important of his occupations. Since then I have been assisted in this by some young men, who instituted experiments on themselves, and whose observations I have critically revised. Following these some genuine work of this kind was done by a few others. But wht shall we not be able to effect in the way of curing in the whole extent of the infinitely large domain of disease, when numbers of *accurate* and *trustworthy* observers shall have rendered their services in enriching this, the only true materia medica, by careful *experiments on themselves!* The healing art will then come near the mathematical sciences in certainty.

In the meantime, even now - thanks to the truthful character of the symptoms, and to the abundance of disease elements which every one of the powerful medicinal substances has already shown in its action on the healthy body - but few diseases remain, for which a tolerably suitable homoeopathic remedy may not be met with among those now proved as to their pure action, which without much disturbance, restores health in a gentle, sure and permanent manner - *infinitely* more surely and safely than can be effected by all the general and special therapeutics of the old allopathic medical art with its unknown composite remedies, which do but alter and aggravate but cannot cure chronic diseases, and rather retard than promote recovery from acute diseases and frequently endanger life. (Underlining emphasizes passages by the author).

Even back then only a few cases remained, for which it was not possible to find an appropriate remedy neither in the “Materia Medica Pura” nor in “Chronic Diseases”, because – as Hahnemann writes - of the abundance of disease elements and the truthful character of the symptoms. This means that only the few remedies, which had been proven extensively and exactly, implying the remedies that consisted of symptoms which were accurately observed, were at that time already able to be applied in the treatment of a great many cases on an individualizing homeopathic basis. Consequently, the extent to which a homeopath using the Materia Medica is able to individualize a certain case, is not just proportional to the number of known remedies, but above all it increases immensely with respect to the extent of the proving. This means that it increases with the number of symptoms occurring in the proving – especially when it comes to characteristic symptoms – and particularly with regard to the accuracy of observation (and the true written account of such). What puts a limit on the extent of individualization, is the reduction of remedies to a core, to an essence, to an idea or to certain concept, which some homeopaths do. The potential for individualization is thereby greatly reduced, because a remedy can only then be prescribed when certain, sometimes rather tight conditions are fulfilled. When the quite existent, great resourcefulness of the Materia medica is limited by such reductions, it becomes necessary to “go and fly beyond” the existing Materia medica. The question of “going beyond the point of knowledge that

already exists in the *Materia medica*”, can then again only be answered plainly by quoting §144 of the *Organon*. This is exactly the kind of freedom which does not exist in homeopathy and should never be permitted; otherwise we will lose the foundation on which we stand.

Following comments are made on the subject of *drug provings* in the interview :

The proving of *Lac Felinum* was carried out according to the Hahnemannian method, all protocols were followed and it was a wonderful proving. When we sat together at the end of the proving and put the whole theme together, one word emerged very strongly as one of the key attributes and that was the word ,prostitute.

He who sets out to do a proving, wants to experience, simply wants to discover what a remedy is able to alter in a person's condition. Why is it not possible to continue on from the point where Hahnemann stopped? Today we always find “the subject matter of a proving summarized” right away, “a central idea” develops rather quickly (for example, “prostituting oneself” found in *Lac felinum*); instead of sticking with the phenomena, there is a tendency toward generalizing instead of individualizing, a tendency toward understanding instead of observing. Therefore, rarely do we come across any exact and strictly phenomenological provings nowadays, because there is a tendency to find out what is behind them, instead of simply sticking to the phenomena themselves. More on this subject can be found on our website in Karl Robinson's article entitled ,Homeopathy, a phenomenal medicine‘.

On the topic of *symptoms and what lies behind them, something deeper* we read the following:

NT: There is certainly a relationship between classical psychoanalysis and aspects of your case taking technique.

Divya: It is interesting that it's close because I have really not read any books on psychology or psychiatry in the formal sense of the terms. So the beauty is, I think, that when something is true, ultimately it would be universal. Its like free association, which is very Freudian, when I first did it, I had no idea it was called “free association”. There was a patient who was a psychology student and when I was explaining it to her, she said, “Oh, you want me to free associate.”

NT: How did you come to this?

Divya: It was a breakthrough moment. You know that there is something missing in some of your cases and that is why they are not responding. So you ask yourself, what is the way that you can get to it. So in one of my cases it was just going around and I knew I was getting something, but there was something I was not getting. She spoke of a dream where the only thing she could say was that there were stones in a room. I asked her in what life situation she felt the same feeling as she felt in that dream, and she said, “Now!” So I knew it was not something I could not ignore but I didn't know what to do with it. “What's your feeling, what's the scenario, describe exactly?” “Its just a room and stones.” “Are they on you?” Nothing. So in that moment, which I think was a culmination of working at the subconscious, I felt there must be a tool. Finally I said, “OK, forget all that we have just talked about, just say the first thing that comes to your mind when I say something to you.” I said, “Stones.” She replied, “Mountains.” From “mountain” she went to sitting there, watching clouds, watching birds, from there she went on to her favorite bird, which was ducks, which tied in to her

whole case as she loved water, loved to wash herself again and again, feeling was “dirty”. So it opened it up.“

My own comment on this is as follows. The basis of a homeopathic prescription is apart from the similarity also the apparentness of such. Only when the similarity is obvious and when clearly comprehensible reasons have lead to a prescription, that these can then be taught. If only a person's aptitude plays a role, then it might fill me with admiration, but I certainly could not learn anything.

The founder of homeopathy described it as an “art of healing, which is a perfectly simple system of medicine, remaining always fixed in its principles as in its practice“. Homeopathy deals with apparentness, phenomenology, pure observation, and with “clearly comprehensible reasons”; the simplicity of homeopathy lies within. It seems as though we find this apparentness somewhat banal at times. We look for something that lies behind it, we work with a model of the unconscious and allow the patient to engage in free association or even start associating things freely ourselves. Often enough it is a sense of desperation that causes us to use these inspirations as an escape, because we are incapable of finding a remedy for this specific patient with these particular symptoms. At weekend courses held by great masters we are shown how it works and we return home with a feeling of incompetence, yet at the same time with the determination of a sunny day that we can engage in prescribing in the same manner, with deep insight and talent. You cannot help but think of a circus, about magic or even clairvoyance (“second sight”). The main illusion in this case is the belief that one has an understanding of the unconscious mind. We are inspired, we can look deeper, we recognize the central idea, the core from which all symptoms arise – at least we think so. What brings about disillusionment and in the same turn makes us feel relieved in a sense, takes place when a patient consults us after such a “deep” prescription and describes plain symptoms, which he is suffering from. This is when reality hits us again. The nice thing about homeopathy is its simplicity and that we can humbly stay on the surface of the phenomena, do not have to be profound gurus and that we can effect a deep cure based on superficial phenomena. Whoever is preoccupied with finding this core or central idea in a patient, does not accept the profound inexplicableness of symptoms; they lose their value by gaining in symbolism, behind which there is yet something else to search for.

The following are further excerpts from the interview on this subject:

NT: So how did you, in your evolution as a homeopath, come to the place where you left aside the more mathematical approach, and started to delve more deeply?

Divya: As I mentioned, homeopathy for me took a big leap when I started to work with Rajan Sankaran. I was a student and at the point where he began to teach me as a student in an individual way, was a time when I was reaching a point of disillusionment. I was seeing symptoms being used in a mathematical way, which I didn't have a problem with, except they didn't work. So I was very clear we're not reaching that high ideal in any patient. People were getting some kind of relief but nothing was shifting. Where we talk about a person achieving the higher purpose of existence is just not happening. So why is it not happening? This means homeopathy is not true!

It was at this point that Rajan began to teach in the college. I guess he must of thought that this one has some brains or she has spirit enough, that he offered to teach me in the clinic a little bit. That's the time when I saw that there is something deeper then only symptoms.

Then of course there was my own experience, my own practice. Once I saw a woman who had severe bleeding piles for ten years, she had nice symptoms. She had a love marriage (In India this refers to an unarranged marriage – ed) but she had a complete aversion to sex. Then she had craving for potatoes. She had a bearing down sensation. So it was wonderful, I gave Sepia and it worked wonderfully. One dose and ten years of suffering vanished. Then I had another women with the same symptoms and some other pathology and I gave Sepia and nothing happened. Obviously I began to question what is happening here? Why is it working in “x” and not working in “y”? There has to be some point I am missing. You have some symptom group, it does work in “a” and doesn’t work in “b”. Obviously you are choosing the wrong symptom group, but how do you know its wrong? Suddenly it comes that you are using a group that is superficial, there is something deeper and then the whole thing just evolved from that. (Underlining emphasizes passages by the author)

Disease solely consists of perceivable signs and symptoms, phenomena to be exact. Making a statement on something that “lies deeper or behind the symptoms“ is not the physician’s job. This is one of the central statements made in the Organon and runs like a red thread through Hahnemann’s whole work. „Innovative homeopathy“ does not pay due respect to this.

§1 Organon, Footnote (8):

His mission is not, however, to construct so-called systems, by interweaving empty speculations and hypotheses concerning the internal essential nature of the vital processes and the mode in which diseases originate in the invisible interior of the organism, (whereon so many physicians have hitherto ambitiously wasted their talents and time); nor is it to attempt to give countless explanations regarding the phenomena in diseases and their proximate cause (which must ever remain concealed), wrapped in unintelligible words and an inflated abstract mode of expression, which should sound very learned in order to astonish the ignorant - whilst sick humanity sighs in vain for aid. Of such learned reveries (to which the name of *theoretic medicine* is given, and for which special professorships are instituted) we have quite enough, and it is now high time that all who call themselves physicians should at length cease to deceive suffering mankind with mere talk, and *begin* now, instead, for once to *act*, that is, really to help and to cure.

§6 Organon (9):

The unprejudiced observer - well aware of the futility of transcendental speculations which can receive no confirmation from experience - be his powers of penetration ever so great, takes note of nothing in every individual disease, except the changes in the health of the body and of the mind (*morbid phenomena, accidents, symptoms*) which can be perceived externally by means of the senses; that is to say, he notices only the deviations from the former healthy state of the now diseased individual, which are felt by the patient himself, remarked by those around him and observed by the physician. All these perceptible signs represent the disease in its whole extent, that is, together form the true and only conceivable portrait of the disease*.

*I know not, therefore, how it was possible for physicians at the sick-bed to allow themselves to suppose that, without most carefully attending to the symptoms and being guided by them in the treatment, they ought to seek and could discover,

only in the hidden and unknown interior, what there was to be cured in the disease, arrogantly and ludicrously pretending that they could. without paying much attention to the symptoms, discover the alteration that had occurred in the invisible interior, and set it to rights with (unknown!) medicines, and that such a procedure as this could alone be called radical and rational treatment.

Is not, then, that which is cognizable by the senses in diseases through the phenomena it displays, the disease itself in the eyes of the physician, since he never can see the spiritual being that produces the disease, the vital force? nor is it necessary that he should see it, but only that he should ascertain its morbid actions, in order that he may thereby be enabled to cure the disease. What else will the old school search for in the hidden interior of the organism, as a *prima causa morbi*, whilst they reject as an object of cure and contemptuously despise the sensible and manifest representation of the disease, the symptoms, that so plainly address themselves to us? What else do they wish to cure in diseases, but these?

Samuel Hahnemann also takes a position on this subject in his Lesser Writings: The following are excerpts from “On the value of the speculative systems of medicine, especially as viewed in connexion with the usual methods of practice with which they have been associated” (10):

It has not been given to mortal man to reason *a priori* on the nature of his own soul.

No man is acquainted with the substratum of vitality, or the *a priori* hidden arrangement of the living organization - no mortal can ever dive into it, nor can human speech, either in prose or verse, even faintly shadow it forth

All, therefore, that the physician can know regarding his subject-matter, vital organization, and all that concerns him to know, is summed up in that...which we might designate the *empirical knowledge of vitality*, viz.: *what the appreciable phenomena are which occur in the healthy human body, and what their connexion is; the inscrutable how they occur*, remaining entirely excluded.

Another quote from Hahnemann's works substantiates his great reservation on the point of going beyond the perception of our senses. In an article named “Spirit of the homeopathic doctrine of medicine” (11) he expresses himself as follows:

Appreciable, distinctly appreciable to our senses must that be, which is to be removed in each disease in order to transform it into health, and right clearly must each remedy express what it can positively cure, if medical art shall cease to be a wanton game of hazard with human life, and shall commence to be the sure deliverer from diseases.

In Hahnemann's eyes man was a mystery, a sacred and unimpeachable being. It was only when he engaged in a drug proving or the examination of a sick person, that he examined phenomena appearing on the surface. He did not ask about reasons in depth, because he was aware that any possible answers could only be based on speculation.

“Innovative homeopathy” is, to a great extent, based on seeing what lies behind and below the surface of phenomena. Nonetheless, understanding phenomena and looking more in depth and behind the symptoms is quite a precarious matter for the homeopathic work of finding the right remedy, particularly when it comes to dealing with phenomena just as they appear. In particular, wanting to understand can pose an obstacle to a work dealing with pure phenomena, when we are on the lookout for the „more striking, singular, uncommon and

peculiar (characteristic) signs and symptoms“ (§153 Organon).

Wanting to understand is the search for understanding. With respect to the term “search” Pablo Picasso once said: “Seeking (searching) is, when one starts out from old things and finds the already known in new things again. Finding is something completely new; the motion is new as well.“ A further comment may be added: The act of finding does not take place by searching, actually it hinders finding.

In homeopathy we have to halt at the point of natural phenomena, and this will not change in the future. This is where our strength lies. The act of invasive understanding, which attains its invasiveness by will, by the search for understanding, easily leads to a distortion of the natural phenomena and to an arbitrary interpretation depending on the person interpreting.

The following passages on the above mentioned topic can be found in a book by Marianne Gronemayer (12):

The act of understanding is constructive, because it creates its own reality. It is destructive, because it destroys yet a different possibility.

Only things which are understood or understandable in the unfamiliar and unknown, can be held true in the action (intervention) of understanding. It has always sufficed mankind to recognize the unknown as that which has been known for the longest time. (13)

The act of understanding is penetrative. It cannot be satisfied with the surface level of the phenomena. It goes under your skin. It wants to gain access to objects, go in depth, and get to the bottom of things; but not for the purpose of seeking the truth, rather to instil one's own truth in them.

The act of wanting to understand is paradoxically at the same time an expression of profound disinterest. When I say to someone: ‘I understand you’ or ‘I have understood you’ what I letting him/her know is: ‘I am through with you. You do not make me feel uneasy anymore. I have made you compatible with my state of knowledge of man and the world. You are a typical example of living beings I am familiar with’. ‘I understand you’, means I do not have anything to do with the unexpected possibilities that lie dormant in you, this way or that way.

It means that the riddle as to whom you are, be it your upsetting and hazardous oddities or your dreadful and delightful difference, is no business of mine. You are the person that I allow you to be. We are through with the person who has been understood.

Those who let the darkness remain dark – as Hahnemann did – bear witness to greater open-mindedness and unaffected scientific character than those who, in a illusional manner, are constantly attempting to throw light on it with strong flashlights and searchlights and at the same time are fooling themselves and others, as if they really knew how it is done in „innovative homeopathy“.

Bibliography:

- (1) The interview with Neil Tessler and Divya Chhabra appeared in ‘Simillimum’ (Vol. XV, No. 4, winter of 2002), Journal of the Homeopathic Academy of Naturopathic Physicians, editor Neil Tessler.
- (2) Hahnemann, Samuel: Organon, sixth edition (translated by William Boericke, M.D.) Philadelphia: Boericke & Tafel, 1922: p.19.
- (3) Hahnemann, Samuel: “Nota bene for my reviewers”, translated and edited by R. E. Dudgeon, in “The Lesser Writings of Samuel Hahnemann”. New York: William Radde, 1852: pp. 659-664.
- (4) *Ibid.* (2), p. 18.

-
- (5) *Ibid.* (2), paragraph 119, footnote 2, p. 197.
 - (6) *Ibid.* (2), paragraph 144, p. 211.
 - (7) *Ibid.* (2), paragraph 145, pp. 212-213.
 - (8) *Ibid.* (2), paragraph 1, footnote, pp. 92-93.
 - (9) *Ibid.* (2), paragraph 6, pp. 94-95.
 - (10) Hahnemann, Samuel: „On the value of the speculative systems of medicine, especially as viewed in connexion with the usual methods of practice with which they have been associated”, translated and edited by R. E. Dudgeon in „The Lesser Writings of Samuel Hahnemann”. New York: William Radde, 1852: pp.488-505.
 - (11) Hahnemann, Samuel: „Spirit of the homeopathic doctrine of medicine”, translated and edited by R. E. Dudgeon in „The Lesser Writings of Samuel Hahnemann”. New York: William Radde, 1852: pp. 617-631.
 - (12) Gronemayer, Marianne: „Das Leben als letzte Gelegenheit”, first edition, (quotations from chapter „Sehen, Verstehen, Dran-Drehen“). Darmstadt, Germany: Primus-Verlag, 1993.
 - (13) Blumenberg, Hans: *Lebenszeit und Weltzeit*, Frankfurt a. M., 1986.