

The following contribution by Daniel Kaiser was written on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the "Wilseder Forum", a meeting of homoeopathically interested medical students sponsored and supported by the Carl and Veronica Carstens Foundation. This reprint is made possible by kind permission of the Carl and Veronica Carstens Foundation.

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The article deals with the pluralism of methods and concludes that the frustration experienced by students of homeopathy is to a large extent generated by these new methods. The author calls for a shift toward a genuine homeopathy.

The Wilseder Forum and the Alt-Wilseder-Forum ten years later - or why no one wants to become a homeopath any more

Ten years ago we founded the Wilseder Forum for students of homeopathy; a short time later Alt-Wilsede followed. Ten years ago an atmosphere of departure existed: once and for all we wanted to show it to conventional medicine and to the medical faculty. Our interests and concern were dedicated entirely to an ingenious method of treatment called homeopathy. We invested a lot of time, money and energy in literature and classes and in our working groups for students of homeopathy. Why? We wanted to grasp homeopathy, to become the best homeopathic physicians possible, to hold the first chairs of homeopathy, and to present documented studies that would point the way to the future by leading to a breakthrough and the recognition of homeopathy at the faculty of medicine.

There was an atmosphere of departure worldwide. Around 1990 homeopathy became more than popular and Hahnemann was soon forgotten, because just like everyone else, we also fell for the great magicians of a worldwide active net of show homeopathy including Vithoulkas, Sankaran, Masi-Elizalde, Juergen Becker, Jan Scholten and most recently, the Seghal-Bros., not to mention those wretched miasmatalogists. –Indeed it is still hip to have booked the 3-year-course at Massimo, nevertheless that does not extricate us from the dilemma which has also effected the Wilseder Forum.

In the meantime we have become aware of where all this has led us to or at least we feel it: namely to the absolute lack of orientation as regards homeopathy. We do not know any more what homeopathy is (and how significant it is). Not that I personally have anything against the persons mentioned above or that I completely reject their ideas: apart from all the nonsense, surely there is the occasional one or the other new and good idea that you could follow up on. Mind you *could*, but I just do not see the necessity. And really, practically speaking: what these authorities taught us and keep on teaching us, does it really work? Can I apply these methods with a good conscience and run a successful homeopathic practice in doing so? Or do I still have to travel to India in order to be consecrated in higher homeopathy? I hardly think so; students having just started classes of one or the other teacher drop out again, and I am glad to hear that. It is possible to shake off the quagmire of psycho-homeopathy and the habit of prescribing according to constructs of the mind! I hope so for us and for the sake of homeopathy. You do not have to go and give up homeopathy as a whole if you fail due to the psycho-renaissance of homeopathy, because it has very little to do with genuine homeopathy anyway. We delved deeper into homeopathy, and behold, all that glitters is **not** gold. For instance, was Hahnemann's claim to exclusiveness in drug treatment a failure? How reliable are drug provings? Were double-blind trials done as well? Can I rely on the Materia medica and repertories? Single drug prescriptions only? Prescriptions of a complex of drugs are also effective! Double drug prescriptions were made too! Prescribing according to similarity?

Based entirely on phenomena? After all, we studied modern pharmacodynamics and physiology! The smallest possible dose, even potencies? And if so, which ones, low or high, D, C, or Q potencies, to be repeated at which intervals? Yes, today we also like prescribing in mg, but unfortunately, unfortunately the diluting and dynamisation process remains a mystery to our scientific minds, a disagreeable black-box, and yet we surely would so much like to know what we are doing! Is there a chance we don't know!? Is there no such thing as a clear picture of illness on the one hand and reliable drug symptoms on the other hand? Do we not have any reliable criteria for the second prescription? (There is not doubt about the fact that teachings regarding disease in homeopathy, i.e. nosology should be considered critically.) A million questions--it's enough to make you go crazy when it comes to homeopathy, or isn't it?

We loved and hated Hahnemann when he was being apodictic! Could he stand up to our criticism? As early as 1993, at the third Wilseder meeting, you could hear people: "Hahnemann is dead... globuli, globula". I love the dadaistic charm of this song, but to me this song was the beginning of a development over a course of years that led to the baby being thrown out with the bathwater, just to land "in the old ditch" (Henning Albrecht) once again, where we really never wanted to end up. Most of us are now lying there and apparently feel as snug as a bug in a rug. All of a sudden we have become very enthusiastic about internal medicine, geriatrics, neurology, psychosomatic medicine, gynaecology and so forth. Yes, I know that conventional medicine can be fun; apparently you are on the safe side, you can also achieve something (what?!) and work "patient-orientated". Can I not do the same being a homeopath!? Homeopathy is "only" just a method of treatment, but I can keep on enjoying the whole fun of differential diagnosis for example, of taking a real case history and doing a physical examination instead of doing a "botched-up job" due to lack of time and then having to dictate the case history plus results to someone in the form of a letter of release, the contents of which do not interest any GP or family doctor. Do you really know what you have given up? Homeopathy is a method of treatment that takes the individual, the indivisible human being in front of us, seriously, with his spirit, his body and his soul, and does so not only in acute, but also in chronic illnesses, which are often beyond all signs and symptoms of diseases (!) we once studied at university. Do you know a better way to overcome the old split in psyche and soma? And do you actually even know how exceptionally brilliant and revolutionary it is to cure someone of let's say an acute psychosis over a period of time (!) with *Lac caninum*, "just" because during adolescence 20 years ago that person had an epididymitis which changed sides?

In addition, we are dealing with a method of treatment that in all seriousness is capable of shaking the entire world of natural sciences (cf. for example *Nature* 1989: When to believe the Unbelievable; the Benveniste Story). We were aware of this at one time, weren't we?--aware that the small globule would not just incredibly shake the foundations of natural science, but in fact would lead to "the fundamental turning point in occidental drug treatment" (Gypser). You want to give that up again too? Did you really gain an understanding of homeopathy or did you, like I myself for a while, fall for false teachings?

Yes, it takes a great deal more effort to learn differential diagnostics regarding homeopathic drugs than the differential diagnostics for internal medicine for example. It also takes more effort to effect a cure that is just as reliable (and often quicker) in cases of pharyngitis, angina tonsillaris, lumbago, hay fever and impingement syndrome [a pain syndrome involving the shoulder joint] than prescribing analgesics, antibiotics, antirheumatic drugs or cortisone pp. Did we want what we can do now? Of course not. What we really wanted was to cure! Now can we claim that we approve of the answer conventional medicine offers us with respect to Spondylitis ankylopoetica, Enteritis regionalis Crohn or Multiple sclerosis? Homeopathy can certainly not accomplish everything, however in accordance with the rules of practice and within its field of indication it can achieve a great deal more than drug treatment can in

conventional medicine. The fact that patients with serious chronic illnesses often do not come to us in time to be treated does not have anything to do with homeopathy. Of course I really cannot do much homeopathically speaking for a patient suffering from an advanced stage of COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] due to the lack of symptoms and the irreversible degeneration of organs. I would prescribe a rollator, psychotherapy, a total endoprosthesis and would substitute with L-thyroxin and insulin even as a homeopath, if this were medically necessary; these are no (longer) homeopathic indications. After all I'm a physician in the first place and then I'm a homeopath.

So have we really dealt with Hahnemann, his great works, his brilliant teachings, and the veritable principles of homeopathy (single remedy prescriptions, provings of drugs, the law of similars, the smallest dose/potency)? No, we cannot say that we have.¹

Then we became interested in homeopathic research, which a lot of people are just as indifferent to, as they are to homeopathy itself. Studies on inflammation of the sinuses and those on tadpoles are mega-out. The fact that this whole issue (as a matter of course) almost totally passes homeopathy by (and really cannot be avoided), is only vaguely registered and productive resistance no longer exists; all you do is hang about dully on the sofas at the conference venue. But someone had to do the job in this world and in this lifetime and this person is Henning (thank god, it is Henning). Year in and year out Henning got on our nerves with his negative results on studies dealing with migraine headaches, endogenous eczema and God knows what. We even lowered ourselves from our homeopathic invulnerability to the seamy side of a discussion about methods of natural sciences that eventually went up in smoke, and is now only held in private circles of participating supporters of biometrics. The general impression remained very, very negative despite some positive results even of studies on classical homeopathy, and thus contributed in a very organic manner to the above mentioned development, that is of landing "in the old ditch" again.

So each of us ended up in our very own personal, homeopathic crisis: we did know quite a bit about homeopathy, even about its shallowness, we were led astray by psycho-homeopathy, were at the pulse of time as regards research, the results of which were negative for the most part and after all, we were acquainted with the apparent reliability of conventional medicine: what comes more readily to mind than to give up on homeopathy again, maybe even after having read the "Donner Report", as if that wasn't enough already?

Well, farewell homeopathy, rest in peace! Because I am now returning to the warm bosom of maternal conventional medicine, am incredibly well-informed and my views are based on the evident nature of things. Once again I comply with the 4-stage treatment of asthma bronchiale (unfortunately lifelong, but so what), and when I treat lumbago with conventional drugs I say: "Voltaren - Auf Wiedersehen!" Yes, and the little six-year-old suffering from juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, who has had two relapses during treatment with cortisone, well she now unfortunately needs methotrexate; science has proven it. I treat endogenous eczema with cortisone ointments and emollient creams --a little psychotherapy would not hurt either. Those with a depressive disorder get Saint-John's wort (*Hyperici herba*), SSRI's [Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors] and behavioral therapy. When treating a young woman with her

¹ Be honest: Have you really looked into *Aphorisms of Hippocrates* [Boenninghausen] or just studied his preface to the *Therapeutic Pocket Book* and perhaps attempted to solve the cases it includes all by yourself (without peeking at the solution below)? Honestly, did you ever read one of Hering's books! How many of us can say they have read the *Organon*, the *Materia Medica Pura*, the *Chronic Diseases*, his [Hahnemann's] *Lesser Writings* or even the comments to his main work? Who has taken a glance at the *Lesser Writings* of Boenninghausen, his volumes *Writings on Medicine*: guaranteed to set you soaring; have you risked a peek at his *Analytical Repertory of the Mind Symptoms* yet? Or did you ever put Kent's *Lesser Writings* or Bogers Collected Writings on your bedside table?

PMS I think progressively and apply phytotherapy. (Now where did I put that drug sample with the extract of *agnus castus*?) Private patients get Traumeel i.v. [a complex drug] (you can claim it extra) following Emmert- Plastik [surgical treatment of ingrown toenails], the old lady with her unspecified dizzy spells receives Vertigoheel [a complex drug]. (By means of private prescription as well, because I'm not stupid and do not wish to debit my budget account with homeopathic drugs!) Since our public health system has been reformed I have had to process a lot of patients and constantly have problems with the association of doctors participating in a health-insurance plan, because you do not get paid for quality, but one thing is for sure--your account balance is good. In any case, I would not have time for homeopathy anyway and, come to that: does it really work? Did I not just let myself be deluded back then, when I was still an enthusiastic student and still gave things some thought?

Well, one way or the other I suppose most of us can identify ourselves with the situation, can't we? Hahnemann called it the "old Schlendrian" [routine art]

But just what is the secret of the small handful of Wilseder students (of a total of 650! hopeful, interested homeopaths-to-be that attended the forum in the past 10 years), who have stayed with homeopathy in spite of everything? Are they the crazy and yet faithful homeopaths, the ones whose views we always rejected, and who still did not dare question Hahnemann after 10 years of Wilsede? Or maybe they are the ones who were lucky enough to learn from impressive experience on themselves and on their patients, what homeopathy according to the rules of practice is capable of doing, that is curing. Are they perhaps the happy few that have grasped homeopathy, the ones who are spurred on by the revolutionary aspect of Hahnemann's approach instead of being put off by it, and who in addition still see themselves in line with our modern understanding of science, i.e. being able to know in advance what you are doing, that is being able to know prior to administration which drug must be the correct one?

Of course, they are the homeopathic practitioners, who simply take pleasure in practising in this patient-orientated manner and who have a high degree of professional satisfaction (and sufficient income).

Is there an alternative, a solution to this dilemma? I believe so: Homeopathy, what else! But now it is a matter of considering homeopathy in its initial, correct, true, reliable and effective form²; homeopathy which can do a great deal and will be capable of accomplishing a lot more upon completion of some papers; not psycho-homeopathy which is only obscure to the mind.

What this implies specifically is: Working in a homeopathic practice, out-patient department or clinic or at a university just like we always wanted to. Furthermore it means: a continuous discussion about Hahnemann, the founder of all of homeopathy and the great experimenter who created the basis for everything and all of which followed thereafter. He left behind 27000 printed pages, which is enough to really amaze you. Then comes Boenninghausen, thanks to whose contribution homeopathy reached the practice stage, including two extensive drafts for repertories as well as treatment manuals, which remain unequalled up to this day. Then there was Hering, who concentrated his efforts on the *Materia medica* and set up a rule that can help judge the course of an illness, a rule which is hardly discussed. He was followed by Kent who created the standard repertory and complemented Hahnemann, who differentiated between common and characteristic symptoms (of patients *and* of drugs), by also dividing them in "generals" and "particulars". His book entitled "Lectures on

² For the past couple of years this form of homeopathy has been running under the name of "genuine homeopathy" driven by the necessity to differentiate it from classical homeopathy gone astray. It is taught by Klunker and Gypser and their pupils. Recommended literature: K.-H. Gypser, *Homöopathie. Grundlagen und Praxis*. Becksche Reihe, Munich 1998.

Homoeopathic Philosophy" that was stenographed by students opened the gate wide to esoterism and it was only 70 years later that it gained recognition worldwide which his publication is certainly not worthy of. Finally there was Boger who on the one hand demonstrated an advanced version of generalization that was previously laid down by Boenninghausen. On the other hand he showed us, by going above and beyond Hahnemann, how to expand on the time factor in the treatment of patients with chronic illnesses, that is by applying it not only as far back as pregnancy but by also including the family case history, which goes beyond all ideas familiar to us with respect to the entity of disease.³

Hahnemann is all; the four others made considerable contributions to methodology and the *Materia medica*. These are the true essentials, for which it is worth working one's fingers to the bones; not for essences, delusions, components, roots, kingdoms, miasms, psoric, sycotic and syphilitic crises, group analyses, dream provings or resonant C 4-triturations or whatever other working models there may be.

And Wilsede? The Wilseder Forum (and the Alt-Wilseder) Forum have a unique status in the current homeopathic scenery of Germany. The credit for always having protected and preserved it is due to Henning. Wilsede is the place where once an entire generation of homeopaths-to-be set themselves free from confidence in homeopathy which lacked criticism and existed within the homeopathic community, and where they learned how to question Hahnemannian homeopathy and how to deal with issues regarding its investigation. I love this place. I believe there is no other place like it, where it is possible to speak and argue about homeopathy in such an open and frank manner. Even all of the invited speakers were impressed by the spirit and the atmosphere which existed there, weren't they?

Yes, we have succeeded in emancipating ourselves from the sphere of influence surrounding "just" homeopathy, so well in fact, that it has thrown most of us right off track again. As far as emancipating ourselves from psycho-homeopathy and gaining a clear sight of genuine homeopathy and its fundamental principles are concerned, we are not even close to it yet. The psycho-fog is probably still too thick to allow this to happen. We shall see how things will continue with us, and in Wilsede and with homeopathy in general.

As for me, I still want to cure, in fact "in the shortest, most reliable, and safest manner, according to clearly intelligible reasons".

Daniel Kaiser

³ There are lots of places you can read up on how the whole thing works practically speaking. A good example is E.E. Case, "Some clinical experiences with selected writings", ed. by Jay Yasgur, Van Hoy Publishers, Greenville PA, USA, 1991 (I know there are more accessible sources, but this book is really a pleasure to read).