

This article first appeared in 'Homoeopathic Links' (Spring 2002, Vol.15, p.1), edited by Corrie Hiwat and Harry van der Zee (www.antenna.nl/homeolinks).

It is presented here with kind permission.

In this article Jan Scholten argues against dogmatism and sticking to authorities ("Hahnemann said...") in Homoeopathy. Clinical symptoms were as important components of the Materia medica as proving symptoms, partly clinical symptoms could differ extremely from the proving symptoms. He contradicts the statement of Hahnemann in § 21 of the Organon, that the curative power of remedies could only be observed by their action on healthy human beings.

Jan Scholten

Dogmatism in homeopathy

In the homeopathic literature and discussion we often encounter strong dogmatic features. The recent discussions in Homeopathic Links has given many examples. Sometimes it looks like religious fanaticism. In order to base one's statement one often finds "Hahnemann has said...". Open discussion is made difficult this way. Science has to do with arguments and facts, not so much with authorities. Following one example of such a viewpoint, we can make the situation more clear.

Only proving symptoms

It's often said that the source of our Materia Medica are provings and only provings. We can find this idea already in § 21 of the Organon (Hahnemann): "Now, as it is undeniable that the curative principle in medicines is not in itself perceptible, and as in pure experiments with medicines conducted by the most accurate observers, nothing can be observed that can constitute them medicines or remedies except that power of causing distinct alterations in the state of health of the human body, and particularly in that of the healthy individual, and of exciting in him various definite morbid symptoms; so it follows that when medicines act as remedies, they can only bring their curative property into play by means of this their power of altering man's state of health by the production of peculiar symptoms; and that, therefore, we have only to rely on the morbid phenomena which the medicines produce in the healthy body as the sole possible revelation of their in - dwelling curative power, in order to learn what disease - producing power, and at the same time what disease - curing power, each individual medicine possesses." Put in more modern language this paragraph looks like: "The curative power of remedies can only be observed by their action on human beings; therefore that curative power can only be learned from their action on healthy humans; this means provings". It's clear from this paragraph that Hahnemann means that only provings symptoms are the source of our Materia Medica. We can conclude from the use of "only" and "sole".

This statement of Hahnemann is often repeated in homeopathy. Julian Winston writes: "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". Heudens repeats this statement often in her seminars. Vitoulkas seems to promote the same idea: "That means you don't prove a substance. If you prove a substance correctly, I have no problem at all".

Practice

What is the practice in homeopathy. This is best illustrated with an example. The example is taken from the "Essence of Materia Medica" (Vitoulkas). These essences are used by many

homeopaths with great satisfaction and have become a kind of standard of the essence of remedies. Lycopodium is just taken by chance. When we check which symptoms from this essence are found in the provings, we find the following results:

Symptoms not found (particularly not in the proving of Hahnemann): coward, inadequate, responsibility, image, friendly, courage, sexual gratification, one night stand, aversive marriage, superficial sex, competent, premature ejaculation, intelligent, intellectual, priest, lawyer, teacher, politician, bluff, inferiority, exaggerate, bloating ego, compensate, admiration, prove, loner, spinster, celibacy, spiritual, obsessed, dictatorial, tyrannical, passive, bolster, lies, fear dark, fear ghost, fear dog, imbecility, senility, emaciation face, emaciation neck, emaciation chest, wrinkled face, wrinkles, hair gray, flapping alae nasi, frigidity, nephritis, stomach ulcer, hemorrhoids, indulgence.

Symptoms found: impotency, stomach pain, bloating abdomen, timid, fear alone, hypochondriasis, confusion, memory weak, flatulence, desire sweets, desire oyster, empty, liver.

So 52 symptoms cannot be found back in the provings, 13 symptoms are found. This means that 80% of the symptoms of Vithoulkas's essence are not found in the provings. This is quite annoying when homeopathy has to be based on proving. Some of the 52 unfound symptoms can be found in the repertory of Kent. But they cannot be traced back to provings as Kent has put a lot of clinical data in his repertory. The conclusion must be that the basic *Materia Medica* is far away from the provings. General keynote can even be in contradiction with the provings. The word left is more prominent in the proving of Lycopodium of Hahnemann, whereas the remedy is known as a right sided remedy.

This is of course only one example. But the same procedure can be done for many other remedies and for many other *Materia Medica*'s. It's a common experience that most homeopaths have pictures in mind quite different from the provings. So most homeopaths won't recognize provings read to them. When I read the first page of the proving of Lycopodium to the audience of the ECCH conference in Trömsö, no one of the 400 homeopaths recognized it. The same happened in 2 other seminars. This can be attributed to the fact that provings are long listings of symptoms. But the fact that no one recognizes it, means that those listings are far away from the pictures those homeopaths have in mind.

Law of Similars states the efficiency of clinical data

We can also look at the statement of § 21 from a theoretical point of view. The law of similars says: a remedy can cure what it can produce. A proving shows what a remedy can produce. Hence provings will show us what a remedy can cure. So proving symptoms and pictures can be used as a *Materia Medica*.

But the opposite is just as true: a remedy can produce what it can cure. So cured symptoms and pictures can tell us the proving picture. This means that clinical information, curative information is just as valuable for our *Materia Medica* as provings. This is inherent in the law of Similars. But the conclusion of § 21 is contradiction with it.

§ 21 in contradiction with Law of Similars

It's even the case that Hahnemann used clinical information to deduce the Law of Similars. He used the information of the curative power of China and compared that with his own proving of China. From the similarity between the two he concluded the Law of Similars. Hahnemann needed both the information of the curative power of China and the proving power of China to derive the Law of Similars. It's one step further to state that the law of Similars can only be deduced by also using clinical curative powers. Without comparing

proving pictures with cured pictures the Law of Similars cannot be deduced (it would be more correct to use the concept of induction instead of deduction; deduction is a logical derivation from laws and axioms: induction is the generalization from a group of events). So the law of Similars cannot be derived without using clinical data. The ultimate conclusion of this way of reasoning must be that homeopaths who are adhering to § 21 of the Organon are in contradiction with the basic law of homeopathy. This is so because § 21 in itself is in contradiction with the law of Similars.

How then did Hahnemann reach his conclusion of § 21. His assumption was: "The curative power of remedies can only be observed by their action on human beings". From this assumption he deduced the conclusion: "therefore that curative power can only be learned from their action on healthy humans; this means provings". In his assumption he speaks about the action on human beings, but in his conclusion he writes of the action on "healthy" human beings. So Hahnemann introduces a limitation of the action, first it was on all human beings, later only on healthy human beings. The limitation is introduced suddenly and without explanation. It's not backed up. Hence the deduction is incorrect, the "therefore" isn't justified. It's a mistake in logic. The conclusion must be that the way of reasoning in § 21 is incorrect.

Of course there had to be something wrong in § 21. The conclusion in it is incorrect as we've seen before. Hence the assumption or deduction of Hahnemann have to be incorrect.

Organon contains contradictions

So § 21 of the Organon contains an illogical derivation and a statement in contradiction with the basic law of Similars. When the Organon would be just a historical document that wouldn't be a big problem. But the Organon is often seen as the basic text of homeopathy. It's often taught in homeopathic schools as the basic homeopathic theory. The Organon is often treated as a bible.

Some examples can make this clear. Thielens writes: "Men who follow law should recognize Hahnemann's Organon as the fixed and settled authority, and the opinion of one or many as of little value". Stuart Close wrote (Saravan*): "He only is 'The Master' to whom the first great revelation of truth was made and by whom it was first developed and proclaimed". Saravan* writes: "The only hero is Hahnemann. Loyalty is to the science and its only Master.". From these statements a picture emerges as Homeopathy being a religion and Hahnemann being it's prophet. These statements are sectarian, not scientific. A science has no masters, only promoters and developers.

Hahnemann

So Hahnemann is fallible, not a holy person that couldn't make mistakes, cannot be criticized. I often encounter situations that I have to defend myself when I criticize Hahnemann. But for me criticizing doesn't mean that I don't admire Hahnemann. I see Hahnemann as the Newton of medicine. He was the first to give medicine a firm ground and some basic laws whereas before that there were only scattered facts without theory. The same was the situation with Newton, he gave physics a firm basis with his laws of mechanics. But even with the enormous admiration for Newton in physics, no student in physics reads the original works of Newton anymore. There are far better accounts of the ideas of Newton, with far better ways of displaying his ideas and mathematics. It would even be an insult to stick to the exact writings and reasoning of Newton.

Some biologists, talking to a colleague homeopath, were astonished that homeopathy was still using books of two centuries ago as text books. How is it possible that homeopathy still uses those books as the Organon? It is as if Homeopathy hasn't developed since it's start. The

biologists asked themselves and us how a science didn't evolve in two centuries still using the same books. Winston sees the adherence to the Organon as a criterion of "good" homeopathy: "Vithoulkas did not spend much time discussing philosophy or the Organon in his in-person lectures". But how can we adhere to a book like the Organon as our basic text book, when already in one paragraph there are violations of logic and of the basic law of homeopathy. That won't promote a lot of confidence in scientist and the public.

When we like to see homeopathy as a science then we have to hold to scientific principles. In science persons have no argument value. Facts and ways of reasoning are the basic statements and arguments. Dogma's of authorities, whether they are Hahnemann or Kent or whoever, have no place in science.

Literature:

Hahnemann S., Organon of medicine, Edition 6B, New Delhi, 1985.

Heudens, seminar notes.

Saravan*, Letters to the editor (p.191), Homoeopathic Links, Volume 13, Number 4, 2000.

Thielens E., Letter to the editor (p.71-72), Homoeopathic Links, Volume 13, Number 2, 2000.

Vithoulkas G., The Essences of Materia Medica, New Delhi, 1991.

Vithoulkas G., A man with a mission, Interview with George Vithoulkas, (p.202-210), Homoeopathic Links, Volume 12, Number 4, 1999.

Winston J., Homeopathy Today, Editorial, 2000.

* meant is the indian colleague K.S. Srinivasan, whose name was wrong written in Homoeopathic Links [Note by K.Habich]