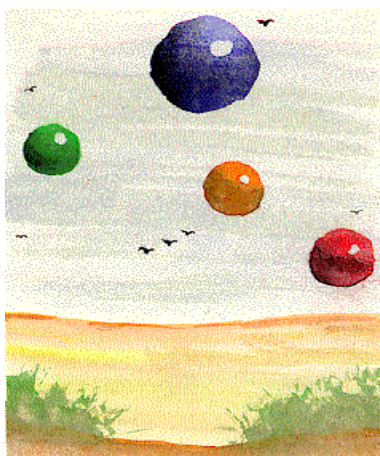


THE CHARACTER OF HAHNEMANN AND THE NATURE OF HOMEOPATHY

by Peter Morrell



Landscape with colour spheres - Peter Morrell

Abstract

This article presents an analysis of Hahnemann's personality and then relates the main elements of it to the development of homeopathy in the world and what I shall call the 'Great Schism'. Based upon his personality and his practice, a critique is then presented, of the claims of modern, self-styled 'classical' homeopaths.

In brief, Hahnemann is presented as a combination of 'fussy pedant' and 'violent revolutionary'. Most of what he did stems from these two strands. The *Organon* stems from the first strand, and homeopathy in toto stems from the second. Classicalism, so-called, rests very largely upon the belief that the *Organon* represents the most important achievement of Hahnemann and that following it forms the basis for the whole of homeopathy.

Yet as we shall see, this claim is entirely reliant on only one aspect of Hahnemann. It is a partial and incomplete view both of Hahnemann and of homeopathy. I therefore recommend a much wider and more balanced approach, both towards *Organon* scholarship and towards homeopathic experimentation in general. In so doing, a new balance might be achieved which more truly embraces the full spirit of Samuel Hahnemann, rather than just the lop-sided and rather pedantic view based solely upon the *Organon*. That would also bring all homeopaths closer into a unity, rather than as warring and disunited factions.

Once we understand Hahnemann clearly, then it is much easier to see the basis for most of what follows.

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No great understanding of homeopathy and its development can be complete without some account of the life and personality of its founder, Samuel Hahnemann. The reason being the immense impact he had on the system which he created. In order to obtain such an account, we can profitably start by reading the biographies by Hobhouse, Cook, Bradford and Haehl, which give a good account of the man and his life. If we then ignore his many travels and the main aspects of his career, which bear little direct relevance to homeopathy, we can peer through the details to see the essence of the man. We can focus on three chief aspects as being especially relevant to the study of homeopathy. These are his personality, the development of his system and his practice. This article considers all three, but mainly focuses upon his personality.

The above sources provide us with more than ample data. But I would also add Rima Handley's 'Homeopathic Love Story' to see another side both of the man and his later practice. Further detail about his character and practice and the development of homeopathy is given in Dudgeon (1853),

which remains an altogether excellent, though badly neglected source of information, much of it apparently unavailable elsewhere. Unlike most other writers, Dudgeon adopts a surprisingly modern approach and succeeds in placing Hahnemann and homeopathy within a much wider historical context.

Taken together, if we immerse ourselves in all these sources of information we soon begin to appreciate much more about Hahnemann as a person --who comes alive before us-- and of how his system and practice developed. Based upon doing exactly that myself for the past seven years, I present my own assessment of the man, his development and his practice. And I do this in part to delineate the possible origins of the great schism within homeopathy.

Hahnemann the Man

After observing him very closely, if we then stand back and observe him from some distance, it is apparent that Hahnemann possessed three main qualities which really stand out as being especially noteworthy, unusual and phenomenal. These are:

1. his astonishing linguistic skills
2. his revolutionary character,
3. his painstaking, methodical and dictatorial nature.

Of course there were other traits, but as I hope to show, these three stand out as the most significant in relation to homeopathy.

1. Linguistic Skills

"A precociously brilliant man, he had mastered eight languages and turned himself into an outstanding chemist by the time he obtained his medical degree in 1779." [Griggs, 1982, p176]

It is true that his linguistic skills really were astonishing and place him in a tiny minority of people throughout history who have fluently mastered 8 languages. For example, many people can master Italian, Spanish and French say, or German, English and Latin, but to have mastered all these languages is very unusual. Even more so when we add Greek and Arabic to the list! It is therefore true to say that he possessed an astonishing gift for languages. And he used this gift in two main ways. Firstly to satisfy his great curiosity about the world and other peoples and cultures; and secondly to give him unique 'windows' into the medical systems and traditions of other cultures. This gave him the opportunity to undertake translations of foreign medical texts into German --a task he threw himself into with great relish in the beginning of his career as a young doctor. All of this gave him an exceptionally wide knowledge of drugs and of how they were used in different cultures -- both ancient and contemporary to his time.

This leaves only two qualities of note which were to have an immense bearing upon the progress of homeopathy --his revolutionary and pedantic sides. We can profit from delving more deeply into these terms in order to gain the insights we need about Hahnemann as a man.

2. The Revolutionary

When we use the word revolutionary we might think of figures like Luther (1483-1546), Paracelsus (1493-1541) or Galileo (1564-1642), or in politics, such figures as Marx (1818- 83), Lenin (1870-1924), or Mao Dse Dung (1893-1976). Such figures appear to stand out of the main stream, to see things very differently, and to wish to change things a great deal, often suddenly. A revolutionary is bad news for the status quo; it is a person who causes trouble. Their actions stem from the fact that they see things others do not see and which trouble them so greatly, that they dare to state their view regardless of the consequences. This is certainly true of Luther, Galileo, etc and all the above figures. It is also true of Hahnemann.

In his case he was a straightforward and quite ordinary young doctor in the 1780's. His only trouble was that he could not get the system he had been taught (allopathy) to work very well, ie. to generate cures. Even worse, he could not get it to work predictably, reliably or consistently.

"Hahnemann was so disillusioned with the state of medical practice and knowledge that, soon after his marriage in 1782, he totally refrained from practising medicine...so deep was his belief that the tools he had been given would do more harm than good." [Danciger, 1987, p5]

And thus he gradually came to detest a system which he had previously adored. This troubled the fussy and pedantic, linguistic side of Hahnemann very greatly. He liked principles and systems; they form the very fabric of all languages --order, grammar, syntax, such things which can be relied upon in any language and which make it work along predictable lines. That appealed to his fussy, pedantic side, as it does to most linguists. It is akin to the fussy pedantry of musicians and mathematicians who also adore that principled, polished and predictable certainty of music and mathematics.

Being a great linguist also set him on the trail of finding out what other people in different times and cultures had done with drugs. This sets the stage therefore for all which came after. Searching in other cultures might provide him with answers to help him refine and improve the useless system of medicine he had been taught, so that it became more rational, more principled and more predictable. This was without doubt his starting point. We might say that this was the 'puzzle' which fate had pushed his way. It was also what most of his contemporary scientists were doing in other fields --polishing, refining, experimenting and establishing principles.

But being so fussy and methodical, Hahnemann was not put off easily. He searched other cultures and times for ideas in support of his desire to reform the irrational medicine of his day --the tool he had been handed but which did not work. He was originally a conservative and methodical man who did not want to fight the whole of medicine to prove a point --if he could avoid it. But once he had satisfied himself that allopathy really was useless --and fundamentally so --out of intellectual honesty he gave up the practice of medicine and amused himself with translation work.

Then, through carefully boiling allopathy down to its barest bones, he could see that it contained only three principles --using mixed remedies, using high doses and using contraries. Knowing through direct personal experience that these did not work, he was led to consider the opposite and deeply heretical principles of --single drugs, small doses and similars. For the next 30 years Hahnemann systematically investigated all three: first single drugs, then similars and finally small doses.

Although he started to use similar medicines around 1790, Hahnemann did not conduct the first experiments with dose reduction until the year 1798.

'We cannot fail to be struck by the sudden transition from the massive doses he prescribed in 1798 to the unheard-of minuteness of his doses only one year later, and we can but guess the causes for this abrupt transition.' [Dudgeon, 1853, pp395-6]

All his research up to 1798 was into single drugs and similars. After 1798 he began systematically to reduce dosage, and he continued experimenting with dosage (or tinkering, as some would call it) until his last days in Paris in July 1843, some 45 years later.

It is interesting historically that he called his new system homeopathy, as it reflects what he did. Though he occasionally deviated from the other two principles, such as using material doses, even late in his career, and he even used some mixed remedies, yet he never compromised the law of similars, which forms the firmest bedrock of his system and which is why it is called homeopathy or 'similar suffering'. The title reflects Hahnemann's care and love of accuracy in meaning.

It is always useful to remember that homeopathy is a system of medicine entirely devised through experiment by one person. This single fact, so easy to miss or gloss over, is supremely important to our understanding and thus why an understanding of the man is the key to its history. Yet strangely,

in its origin it was inspired as a systematic critique of a useless system --a system which did not work. He started with what was bad and which did not fit the facts, and decided to improve it. And that is just as revolutionary as Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo and Luther. That is what I meant by a revolutionary.

3. The Fussy Pedant

I said his second quality was revolutionary and we can all see that side of him very clearly. Homeopathy itself is most certainly a revolutionary form of medicine and it stands as abundant evidence in itself of the scale of his achievement.

The third feature of Hahnemann I have picked out is his methodical side. Now, while I would say that the two previous qualities were outstanding and mainly positive and beneficial in character, I must confess that I rank this third quality as outstanding but almost entirely negative in nature. A comment I must now try to justify and explore in greater depth.

A 'person of principle' is a person who follows guidelines assiduously and never varies. The philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was just such a man. Yet a person of principle has a hard time in life, because it rarely conforms to their fussiness. It frustrates them when it is not as they want it to be. A person of principle is usually born that way --few I think would arrive at it through experience or choice. I think Hahnemann was born that way as it is there from the start. To begin with, his fussy, methodical and painstaking nature was beneficial and positive, as it made him study hard, in great depth and to get right to the bottom of things. It probably forms the basis of his linguistic skills, for example. It also led him to ascertain the true nature of any problem in a detailed, systematic and accurate fashion.

Detail, accuracy and principle are the very hallmarks of such a mind, and Hahnemann possessed these qualities in abundance. But unfortunately for him (and for homeopathy) these qualities all too often tend (in any of us) to degenerate and solidify into a rigid dogmatism; into a belief that so-called principles come before practice; to an insistence that you are right and everyone else is wrong; to petulant outbursts due to overexacting fussiness; and to the vilification of opponents. Which sadly is a pretty good description of what happened in Hahnemann's case.

So this side of Hahnemann and homeopathic history --the two being welded together for so long --is almost entirely a trail of tears. And in my opinion, he was a fool to drag homeopathy through the mud in the way he did and to give it the worst possible start imaginable. A big fool. None of it was necessary and most of it derived from his own excessively dogmatic, irascible, reactive and really rather paranoid attitude towards others, most especially his closest and most devoted followers. Most of whom he unnecessarily upset and then accused of treachery. This negative side of him was very real and there is no use in our denying or ignoring it. In fact, it is vital to our understanding of the man and the early history of homeopathy. It is also very regrettable, as he cast everyone into the role of enemy of him personally and of homeopathy in general. That was foolishness of a high order, as it created a very troubled, combative and divisive start for homeopathy, which it has never successfully shaken off.

Worse still, it set the tone for all later homeopaths to emulate his bad behaviour and to be as hardline, bombastic and argumentative as he had been himself. It was a mistake to attack allopathy in the way he did and a mistake to try and change the rest of medicine. It was a futile, self-created battle which he had no hope of winning. It is still futile today and homeopathy should seek dialogue and peaceful co-existence with allopathy, not argument and discord. The two systems will never merge and stem from entirely different views of the world. But no doubt to Hahnemann at the time, he must have felt that he had a good chance of creating a revolution for the whole of medicine. He must have thought that or else he would not have acted in the way he did.

When I say Hahnemann was hardline, dogmatic and dictatorial what I mean is that he allowed for himself the luxury of complete freedom of experimentation, but stifled the same trait in others. He enjoyed for himself the freedom to make changes or to change his mind whenever he felt like it (eg.

the coffee theory) and to experiment continually, but he rebuked very severely anyone else who made small changes, voiced freedom of thought or mildly critical suggestions about homeopathy. Such people were exposed to unbelievable ferocity from Hahnemann, amounting in fact to violent and unrelenting, scornful derision. The net result was that they ended up saying nothing, for fear of provoking such reactions from him. Thus he upset most of his closest followers at one time or another, usually over some trivial matter. Haehl and Bradford are packed with examples.

A good example is the argument he had with Schreter, Jenichen, Korsakoff and Boenninghausen over their use of the higher centesimal potencies (ref Morrell, see also Haehl, vol 1, p32; Bradford, 1895, pp466-7; Dudgeon, 1853, p407-8). Hahnemann was opposed in principle to the higher potencies even though he felt at liberty to make actual use of them himself on several occasions, whenever the mood took him (ref Handley). It appears from incidents of this kind that he rather selfishly wanted to keep as his own every aspect of homeopathy as a system, admitting no external influence from anyone, and jealously dismissing any interesting contributions made by others. He was violently opposed therefore in others to the very kind of freethinking and experimentation which he freely indulged in himself --which is at the very least unfair and bizarre.

In this sense therefore he looks like a 'control freak', quite unwilling to delegate the minutest particle of power and freedom to others. Homeopathy was HIS baby and he seemed determined to keep it that way. That is the distinct impression one gets from reading accounts of these incidents in Haehl, Bradford and Dudgeon. The only reason Boenninghausen managed to keep on such friendly terms with him was NOT by copying everything he said, but out of his immensely genial nature and his great love for Hahnemann.

'On the 20th of January last the genial and excellent old Dr C Von Boenninghausen died of apoplexy at the age of 79 years...' [Obituary, BJH, 1864]

Yet somewhat perversely, Boenninghausen had disagreed completely with Hahnemann for years about the higher potencies and used the 100, 200 and M potencies routinely for every case. He wrote many articles extolling their virtues. In effect they agreed to disagree and so remained on good terms and corresponded to the end. The articles (found in his Lesser Writings) are as follows:

The High Potencies, (1850)

Typhoid Fever and High Potencies, (1853)

Traumatic Ailments and High Potencies, (c1853)

The Advantages of the High Potencies, (1864)

Jenichen's High Potencies, (1867)

The Value of High Potencies, (1867)

The Use of High Attenuations in Homoeopathic Practice

Cures of Animals with High Potencies, (1873)

Experience and the High Potencies, (1846)

It is fairly obvious from incidents of this type that Hahnemann appears like a hypocrit, forbidding others to do what he himself was quite content to try out in private. And it is also obvious that this punitive, dogmatic and hardline side of Hahnemann came to be peculiarly crystallised in the tone and language of the Organon, which has been used by successive generations of homeopathic zealots as a type of 'homeopathic Bible'. A Bible they have willingly beaten the less faithful with at every opportunity. And the writings of most modern 'Classicalists' are just as arrogant and dogmatic in their insistence that the Organon contains everything there is to know about homeopathy and Hahnemann.

More On His Character

It is somewhat debateable and of interest to us, as to which of the two chief mental qualities was dominant or uppermost at different times in his long life. I have argued that his iconoclastic and revolutionary side was largely dominant, and I think there is a good case for stressing that aspect of his character, as it has been largely ignored hitherto, or played down as of no import. However, on closer inspection of his career, we can see that the linguistic, pedantic and meticulous side was dominant in his early life as a studious, bookish youth and at university. This side was also clearly the dominant influence when he wrote the Organon, and was probably what we might term his 'original state'. But once roused, his fearsome iconoclasm became very dominant, especially after he had become wholly disenchanted with allopathy and finally rejected it outright as a useless system. From that point forwards and for many years (c1785-1835) he was a violent polemicist against allopathy and just as violent a campaigner for homeopathy. He spared absolutely no opportunity to denigrate allopathy, and in the strongest possible language. Which generated a lot of trouble for him.

"Hahnemann...began openly to criticise the proceedings of his medical colleagues with inexorable severity...Besides this he protested against the practice at that time employed with the insane, whom the doctors and attendants treated as wildbeasts." [Jain, 1977, p3]

"Thus it was that his independence became very obnoxious to the private physician of the recently deceased Emperor Leopold II of Austria, [this was in 1792] when Hahnemann openly charged him with being the cause of his death from the employment of excessive blood-letting in pleurisy." [ibid., p3]

This destructive (?) and experimental side to his nature knew no bounds during the middle period of his life and seems to strongly echo the turbulent career of Paracelsus. It is accurate to say that he flipped constantly from fussy pedant to revolutionary experimenter and back again throughout his long life, only later, in his Paris years, attaining a degree of less contentious tranquillity. Yet even then, in his maturity, we still find him busy experimenting, right to the end, trying out new ideas: devising the LM scale; using mixed remedies; prescribing for each presenting symptom (contrary to his own instructions in the Organon); opening every case with Sulphur; using olfaction; changing the dosage, even by the hour or less at times, like Clarke 50 years later --

'A keynote of Dr Clarke's work in homoeopathy was his catholicity... Clarke was one of the few homoeopaths who really practised what he said, "that there is a place for every potency, from the mother tincture to the highest, and the physician's skill consists in knowing which to choose and when."

'Clarke had no hesitation. He would give remedies within extraordinary short range of one another; he would give one on top of another, and resort to different potencies. Mostly at that time he was giving fairly high potencies, 30s and 200s for chronic cases.' [Dr John H Clarke, An Appreciation, BHJ, 1932, pp116-125]

And all the time (and in secret) Hahnemann was polishing his 6th Edition and distilling into it his new ideas. Indeed, he seems at times to have tried the opposite of every maxim in the Organon, going out of his way to be a rebel against his own system. Why?

He must have hesitated a great deal over the 6th edition, unable to keep it up to date, never certain maybe, that he had finally captured in writing the elusive truth of his full system, and maybe never convinced that the world was ready (or able) to comprehend his final teachings. So, essentially, he was a strange mixture: a meticulous and perfectionistic pedant combined with a furious polemicist; with a willingness to experiment endlessly, in order to construct or fashion a system which worked and which worked predictably and along the lines of established principles. In other words, exactly what allopathy wasn't.

In that sense he was certainly a figure sublimely typical of the 18th century --a product of his times --like Goethe (1749-1832), Voltaire (1694-1778) and the Encyclopedists Rousseau (1712-78), Diderot (1713-84), etc, building up new ideas and grand systems based mainly upon personal observation and experiment and the rejection of past traditions and old dogmas (see Rogers, Russell, Tarnas).

He was also very like all his fellow 18th and 19th century scientists, who were also pioneers of experimentation, and who he admired so greatly. I think he really strongly yearned for their support and approval, if only for the sheer originality, vision and soundness of his work. And its rationality.

And because he never received their recognition, praise or adulation (which he certainly felt he deserved) that seems to have boiled up inside him and triggered his bitterly venomous and unrelenting onslaught against orthodoxy in general. A veritable 'blitzkrieg' if ever there was one. Perhaps he never forgave them for abandoning him in his darkest hour of need. For their failing to recognise the importance of what he was doing and the 'root and branch' revolution he was creating for medicine. And fifty years after his death, allopathy finally started to reduce its doses, and to use single drugs instead of mixtures, just as he had first suggested, though he never got any credit for that.

The Pragmatist

Another important aspect of Hahnemann's character which I have neglected to mention, and which certainly lies hidden in all of this, was his unfailing pragmatism, his ability to see that what works is of paramount importance in medicine. This was part of the 'good doctor' in him, no doubt. Medicine is an art and not a science, yet it must always produce results. It is not theory-led, but practice-led. Theory is fine, but does it cure the patient? This was constantly at the back of his mind. Thus he had the unfailing ability to grasp the massive importance of what works in practice and a willingness to abandon quickly and completely anything --everything --which did not work. To recognise and reject what was useless and move forward, then innovate again confident of eventual victory. When all was razed to dust, he would just start all over again. Remarkable quality. He never lost this shrewd pragmatism and optimism in the face of defeat, even though it contrasted so sharply with his more conservative, pedantic nature.

This is interesting and unusual psychologically. There are so many fussy and over- intellectual pedants who lack this skill, and probably as many practical innovators and experimenters who cannot write a clear account of what they do and why. Yet Hahnemann could do both and brilliantly and this was his ultimate strength: he combined in the one person very divergent qualities, rarely found together; qualities which were apparently cemented together by this extraordinary pragmatism. He had no truck whatever with ideas for their own sake, and was thus not really an intellectual in the ordinary sense, but only with 'ideas which work'. And ideas which work fired his entire being. And homeopathy is above all else an idea which works.

Practice

When we read of his practice and methods in the sources already mentioned and especially in Handley 1988, 1992 and 1997 (and also Adler, Michelowski et al), we can then more fully appreciate that the experimental side of his nature was very much in the driving seat for most of the time. And it is also clear that he often deviated widely from his own dictates as found in the Organon. In the final years in Paris, the old disputes and his deep dogmatism appear to have died-down, volcano-style, and he attains a quieter and more sage- like tranquillity, busy experimenting right till the end, and no doubt influenced a lot by Melanie.

It appears from Handley's studies that Hahnemann did all sorts of things in his Paris practice which previously in his writings he had expressly forbidden others to do. These can be summarised as follows:

1. Most cases are opened with Sulphur - some 90% of chronic cases. Sulphur was often repeated frequently in the early stages until symptoms of another remedy appeared and then that was given. Sometimes only Sulphur was used throughout.
2. He also prescribed for anything that came up in the course of treatment eg some cough or symptoms of an acute nature.
3. He treated the return of old symptoms in the same way. In every case he regarded the return of old symptoms with delight and saw a new symptom as an indication of the next new remedy.
4. He also commonly used two remedies at the same time.
5. He frequently prescribed one remedy by mouth and another by Olfaction.
6. The LM's he used in many different ways and asserted that they--a. could be repeated very frequently without aggravation or harm and b. maintained continuous stimulation of the vital healing force. The LM's appear therefore to be mainly a product of his impatience with slow cases.
7. In his early days in Paris he mainly used 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 24 and 30 potencies. He then progressed to using the 200 and the 95. These remedies were often repeated frequently every day sometimes twice a day, or more up to a max of 6 times a day! He often used widely different potencies in the same case, going lower for acute conditions and higher for chronic work. He tended to use LM's for chronic and the centesimals for any acute symptoms that emerged.
8. He often repeated remedies very frequently. He abandoned the centesimal potencies mainly because of their power to produce aggravations. He suspected that the higher dilutions (above 30) would increase aggravations and he was very cautious about them. He used two remedies at once when he felt it necessary. He treated most symptoms as they came up.

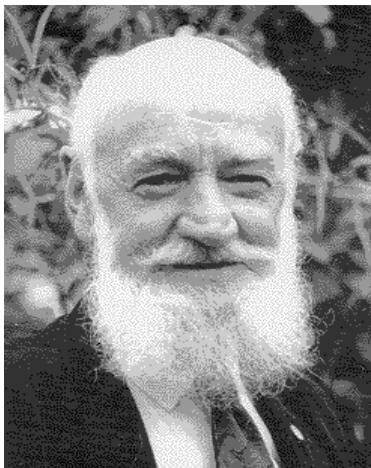
These facts derive from close study of his Paris Casebooks (*Krankenjournalen Pariser Praxis*), and clearly reveal a very wide gulf between what he recommends to others in the *Organon* and what he himself did in practice. And this creates a real problem for homeopaths today: which do we follow? The rebel, pioneer, experimenter and iconoclast: the discoverer of homeopathy? Or the pedantic, fussy scholar who wrote the *Organon*? Which side more truly represents homeopathy? Which did Hahnemann himself likely regard as his most prestigious and important gift to posterity? The *Organon*? Or his entire system of revolutionary medicine based upon clear principles? Some would urge us to choose one and some the other. Maybe we should embrace them both as the full Hahnemann.

The Organon

To what extent Hahnemann succeeded in creating a set of workable principles is in fact somewhat open to question. The *Organon* is a complex work. Successive generations of homeopaths have always had some difficulty with it and have grappled with its various translations and with variable success in actually copying the instructions of the Master. Yet it remains an obscure, dense and opaque piece of writing. But the most damning fact by far is that Hahnemann did not follow it very closely himself. This throws into doubt its value at all and therefore begs the question as to whether homeopaths might be better off ignoring it completely and copying instead what he actually did in practice rather than what he wrote. The same criticism can be levelled at Kent, whose *Lectures* are merely a garbled and incomplete 'biblical commentary' to the *Organon* but mixed up with alien ideas from Swedenborg.

Many homeopaths over the years have actually had the insight to abandon the strictures of the *Organon* and develop their own innovative and experimental forms of homeopathy, just like the later Hahnemann. Examples include Burnett, Clarke and **Maughan** in Britain. Clarke in particular was very like Hahnemann as he used quick-fire, rapid succession, low potency homeopathy with occasional use of higher potencies, occasional use of tinctures and occasional use of mixed remedies --just like Hahnemann himself, as portrayed in Handley's writings. All of these

homeopaths are in their own ways iconoclastic and experimental -- practice-led rather than theory-led.



Thomas Maughan

Deviation

The question inevitably arises as to why Hahnemann should have chosen to deviate from the Organon and practise on an experimental basis. The obvious answer to this question is both personal and practical --that he could not get the Organon system to work as well as he liked. Thus he deviated from it. An alternative view is that he just could not resist the temptation to experiment and tinker. This is unlikely as he was so methodical in everything he did.

His decision to deviate from his own principles as stated in the Organon must have been based upon practice. Everything else he did and revised was done to improve the practical value of his system. He never revised things on theoretical grounds alone. An example is his refusal to sanction any kind of spiritual views associated by Bonninghaussen, Schreter & Co with the higher potencies. He did not really hold 'spiritual views' about homeopathy.

Two other important threads emerge about his deviation from the Organon. One is that as a teacher of others he may have inadvertently overemphasised to them the importance of theory over practice. There seems to be some mileage in this argument. Also, the history of homeopathy since Hahnemann clearly shows that in different lands and continents, people have adapted his teachings and principles differently and devised various modes of practice, all with their own good track records. This also favours the idea that practical experimentation remains the dominant basis for homeopathy rather than slavishly following an 'Organon of principles' as the Classicalists insist.

It also tends to dilute considerably the central and unquestioned importance of the Organon within homeopathy to something approaching that of an 'historical relic', rather than the main text on the subject. A homeopath can just as truly call him or herself 'Hahnemannian' to the degree by which they follow Hahnemann himself in practice, and especially through pioneering experimental work, as to the degree by which they pedantically follow the Organon. But as we have seen, these are wholly different things. As previously mentioned, relying on Kent as the basis for Classicalism also creates problems. Also, as Kent died in 1916 and the 6th Edition did not appear until 1922, it is clear that his Lectures inevitably give an incomplete view both of Hahnemann and of his system.

Thus Classicalism seems to be very largely an attempt to follow only one side of Hahnemann, the fussy pedant, and to downplay or ignore entirely his original, iconoclastic and experimental side. In this sense therefore classicalism is a myth which has dominated homeopathy for too long. And which must be challenged if any progress is to be made.

Dudgeon

Dr Dudgeon should be especially commended because he stands out as one never afraid to criticise Hahnemann wherever he disagrees with what he sees as the excesses or deficiencies of his system.

For example, the ludicrous Coffee Theory of chronic disease (On the Effects of Coffee from Original Observations (Leipzig, 1803) and listed in his Lesser Writings, pp391-410.), the Miasm theory (see Dudgeon, 1853, pp242-301) and the higher potencies (see Dudgeon, 1853, posology, pp391-446; mixed remedies pp486-91) --all of which he gives short shrift.

'...Hahnemann himself alludes to the essay he wrote upon the action of coffee in 1803, where he had ascribed the production of a multitude of chronic diseases to the action of that all but universal beverage, and he confesses that he thinks he had ascribed an exaggerated importance and gravity to its use; since his discovery of psora as the cause of many chronic diseases, he is inclined to attribute to that agent the production of most of those affections he had imputed to coffee.' [Dudgeon, 1853, p259]

The point here is not that Dudgeon was necessarily right or wrong in these judgements, but that he shows such refreshing (and unique?) independence of mind in attempting to present to his audience a balanced and non-partisan view of homeopathy. No other writer within homeopathy, before or since, has shown such remarkable independence of thought. Instead, they all prefer to drool and slaver unquestioningly over Hahnemann, all of his ideas and the Greats, and to queue up slavishly, caps in hands, to heap their praises and devotions upon their revered Master.

This is the very tendency which Hahnemann himself so detested and fought against, just as Paracelsus had before him --burning the books of Galen and Avicenna in an attempt to wake his students up to new ideas. This drooling and sycophantic mentality is the cause of much mythologising and nonsense within homeopathy down the years, and clearly stands in the way of our making any clear and objective assessment of the system as a whole. It is unnecessary in any case and prevents the subject gaining the social and medical acceptance it deserves.

The same mentality dominated the Middle Ages; gave the Pope and his Cardinals absolute and unquestioned power for centuries; gave kings and queens throughout history (and more recently communist dictators) the power to ride roughshod over their subjects and treat them with contempt; and which is still created and maintained today by weak people who cannot think for themselves and crave 'leaders' and 'heroes' to do it for them. Within homeopathy it has been especially heaped upon Hahnemann and Kent, and to a degree which is quite sickening to behold. A cool and balanced assessment of these figures is impossible to obtain until this bloated and sugary sweet rhetoric of myths and legends is teased to one side and real facts and figures are actually examined.

We should remember that all the Greats of homeopathy were first and foremost human beings like the rest of us, and we must strive to see them in a broader sweep, warts and all, and resist this ludicrous tendency to overeulogize and mythologize big figures from the past or the present. A good example of this loathsome habit is Schmidt's claim that Kent saw over 18000 patients in a certain year (see his biography of Kent). Debates and divisions are not resolved through clinging to one position, but through open dialogue and experiment within an atmosphere of mutual respect from both sides.

Historical Backdrop

There is another aspect relating to dogmatism and principles which also has an interesting historical thread. If the *Materia Medica Pura* was the 'what' of homeopathy, then clearly the *Organon* was meant to be the 'how' and 'why'. Hahnemann was trying in the *Organon* to produce a list of clearly identified principles, aphorisms and guidelines through following which anyone could come (hopefully) to practice and understand his system. Yet it remains a mystery where the idea for such a grand work came from and whether in fact he had read some philosophical work which inspired him and which he might have used as a template.

Probably no other single event in the history of philosophy --and in the history of German philosophy --was as important as the publication in 1781 of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which 'raised him to the foremost position among living philosophers.' (Rogers, p376). It placed him in the firmament of German Idealists for all time. At that very time Hahnemann was starting his

'systematic disenchantment' with allopathy and wondering, no doubt, if there would ever be found any clear 'guiding principles' for the practice of medicine.

It is my provisional hunch that it was Kant's work which inspired Hahnemann to write the *Organon*. He cannot really have failed to have seen it and probably read it. Rogers says '...for Kant, the truths of the intellect are subordinate to the truths of the practical will...scientific reason [has] the right to induce belief.' (Rogers, p398). Ideas which would most certainly have found fertile ground in the thinking of Samuel Hahnemann in the 1780's and 1790's. Indeed, we read in Hobhouse (p104-5) that Hahnemann liked Kant's writings and expressed this in a letter to von Villers.

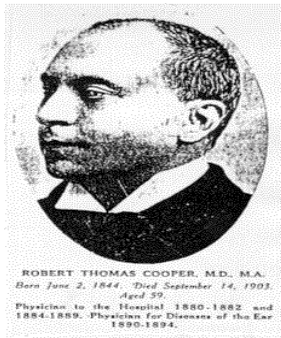
Either way, Hahnemann clearly intended his *Organon* to become refined over time such that its principles could be amplified, clarified and updated, probably elevated eventually to the status of 'natural laws'. That he wrote six editions during his life might well be seen as good evidence of this tendency to revise and elevate. It is also true that this tendency to formulate natural laws was at that time very common, for example in Optics and Chemistry in particular, but also in natural science in general. And Hahnemann was keenly aware of all developments taking place in science, especially his beloved chemistry. Post-Enlightenment, it was a time of great systematisation of knowledge in all fields and the building up of grand systems for the first time.

Thus the *Organon* actually has two origins. First it was Hahnemann's personal idea to formulate his ideas and system of medicine into a series of aphorisms. To make it into a system of medicine based upon clear principles, which in his view allopathy certainly wasn't. This stemmed very largely from the dogmatic, fussy, high-principled and pedantic or *Arsen alb* side of his nature. Second, he had around him in the world, hosts of other scientists doing exactly the same thing in various other fields of endeavour. These include Michael Faraday (1791-1867), Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), John Dalton (1766-1844), Dmitri Mendeleev (1834-1907), Antoine Lavoisier (1743-94) and Karl Scheele (1742-86) in Chemistry. Hahnemann is reported to have met Lavoisier in Dresden c1786 and also corresponded with him (Hobhouse, 1933, p59). In Botany there was Carolus Linnaeus (1707-78), in Zoology, Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) and Jean Lamarck (1744-1829) and in Geology, Sir Charles Lyell (1797-1875). So the development of his ideas into a grand system was not only his own idea, but also part of a 'tide of the times' or 'zeitgeist'. Experimentation led to the establishment of principles and laws and so the fabric of science theory was built up c1700-1900 (see Russell, Rogers, Tarnas).

Classicalism

The classicalists will probably reject most of what I have said as nonsense and also my main thesis. All I can do is to repeat the central and fundamental question: if the *Organon* truly represents the whole of homeopathy then why did Hahnemann not practise according to it himself? I have explored in detail the possible reasons for that and I believe I have presented a reasonably sound and comprehensive analysis of the character of Hahnemann and the nature of his impact upon the development of homeopathy --the two being almost completely inseparable. The Classicalists cling to a myth, the myth that the *Organon* is the whole of homeopathy. As I have already shown, the *Organon* is NOT homeopathy and this cuts away the central pillar which supports their view.

As I have also shown, he was first and foremost an experimenter, an empiricist and a dangerous medical rebel or heretic, just like Paracelsus before him --though far more rational and systematic. Though he did attempt to formulate a grand theoretical system of principles in the *Organon* (along Kantian lines) he could never shake off his deeply ingrained experimental tendency. And thus the *Organon* was never finished or fully updated and therefore does not represent the whole of homeopathy, only one aspect. At best it shows only half of Hahnemann's full system.



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We should now more confidently seek guidance on practice not in the Organon, but in Hahnemann's later practice, for a fuller view of homeopathy. We can also look to others since Hahnemann who have pioneered interesting experimental work. These include Burnett, Clarke, **Cooper**, Bach, Maughan, etc in Britain and many others in Latin America and elsewhere. It also includes the provers like Jeremy Sherr and Madeline Evans. All such work is within the experimental spirit of Hahnemann, though clearly at variance with the scholastic pedantry of his Organon side. The future development of homeopathy should look more towards the experimental side of Hahnemann for any progress and new developments.

This essay was not composed as an attack upon Classicalism. That was not my express intention. It began as a new way of understanding Hahnemann and forming a clearer picture of what he was about. Nevertheless, it is true that the Classical position does place a lot of emphasis on following the Organon and is sceptical of 'late Hahnemann studies'. They also tend to dismiss any freethinking and experimentation as unHahnemannian and against the spirit of homeopathy. As I have tried to show, this is a threadbare argument. After upsetting them so much, the best I can do to try and win them over is to say that the Organon and the rebelliousness and experimentation both have an equal claim to be regarded as the main aspects of Hahnemann himself. Thus homeopathy must reflect both those elements in order to be truly Hahnemannian. Currently it does not have that balance and tilts too far towards Organon-inspired classicalism and pedantry.

Conclusions

The central and most baffling question remains why Hahnemann chose to deviate from the dictates of his own work, the Organon. And this of course, raises other questions we must address. To have deviated from it implies, historically, that he had gone too far (or too early?) in the direction of his contemporary scientists and philosophers in attempting to formulate a grand system of natural laws. And, that far from being a true system at that stage, it was in fact deficient, incomplete and imperfect in some respects. Why else would he abandon its directions? If the Organon was so wonderful, so complete and so perfect, as Classicalists would still have us believe, then why did he continue to experiment right up to the end? How can you revise and extend that which is already perfect? We can only conclude from this fact that he could not resist the temptation to revise and improve something that WAS imperfect and unsatisfactory in some important way which he perceived, and probably only he perceived.

If this were not the case, then it all becomes very confusing for a serious homeopath who wishes to be as Hahnemannian as possible. Which edition should he or she follow? And which translation?

This line of argument also ties in with three other aspects of the late Hahnemann. Firstly his refusal to publish the 6th edition of the Organon and Melanie and then her daughter clinging on to it for so long --to 1921 in fact. Secondly is the argument he had about the high potencies, of which he strongly disapproved vocally, even though he used them occasionally in his last years in Paris. Thirdly, there is his development of the LM scale of potencies. If everything was so complete, then why go and create an entirely new scale of potencies that followers had no knowledge of and which would lead to further confusion? All of these factors collude to strongly imply that Hahnemann was still experimenting and to have been such, he must have been unhappy about certain aspects of his system as published up to 1843. To believe otherwise is clearly to ignore a lot of evidence.

'I have been fascinated to discover the amount of experimentation and ad hoc solutions to which Hahnemann resorted...what is interesting, however, is to see how often he broke his own rules, as do all creative people.' [Handley, 1997, p15]

There is also another problem. This relates to the main aspects of his personality. That he was still 'tinkering around' in his last years also suggests that he was mainly an experimental person, rather than the pedant we have seen. Thus it implies that again the classicalists have got it wrong. From his failure to act more decisively in his final years, this implies that he did not consider that the Organon stood supreme over practice and experimentation. If he did think that then he would have taken steps and found the time (made the time) to update and publish a 6th or even a 7th edition in those final years. If the Organon WAS his main work, as Classicalists suggest, then why did such a determined and energetic man not find the time to publish all his final ideas?

That he neglected to do that implies that his thoughts were elsewhere -- for example on further experimentation and continual revision of technique in practice. This also implies psychologically, therefore, that in the last analysis his experimental urge was always by far the more dominant and uppermost in his mentality and not the pedantic side which composed the Organon. And thus again we are led to conclude that the classicalists have got it wrong and misinterpreted his intentions by choosing to overemphasise the central importance of the Organon as written dogma 'carved in stone', rather than experimentation. In doing so they have missed the true Hahnemann and thus missed the true homeopathy.

Maybe the Organon was merely a venture or experiment in ideas for Hahnemann and which he later became disenchanted with in some way and he may have dithered over its actual importance? We shall never know the answer to that. Towards the end he may also have realised the deep dichotomy in his thinking and realised that the pedant was in truth the smaller part of him and that what he really liked to do was tinker around and experiment with ideas that work. Maybe that sums up Hahnemann better than anything else. If so, then the Organon really does appear like a beached historical relic of little lasting value and the Paris Casebooks therefore take on immense new significance. In which case they should at long last be revealed in toto to the homeopathic world for the jewels of insight they must contain about his final ideas.

At last, and 200 years after Hahnemann's 'first footprints on fresh sand', Rima Handley has published her long studies of the Paris Casebooks. But will the homeopathic world actually sit up and take notice of their contents? And make the necessary adjustments to their beliefs? Or will they continue to prefer a thundering silence and the same old spats over dogmas in the Organon? In my view, that would seem now to be the real challenge for modern homeopathy and the true legacy of the life and work of Samuel Hahnemann. Do homeopaths wish to be united under a single banner? Or to remain as the bickering mess we see before us today?



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