

200 years “Organon of Medicine” – A comparative view on its six editions (1810–1842)

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Summary

Samuel Hahnemann’s “Organon of rational therapeutics”, published in 1810, marks neither the beginning of homeopathy nor the endpoint of its development. On the one hand, its contents are based on terms and concepts developed and published by Hahnemann during the preceding two decades. On the other hand, the five (revised) editions of the Organon that followed in the next three decades contain major changes of theory and conceptions. Hahnemann’s basic idea, however, running through all the stages of founding, elaborating, and defending his doctrine, may be detected by a comparative view of his works – from a historical and philosophical perspective.

Introduction

This year, in 2010, homeopathy is once again said to have reached its 200th anniversary. The truth is, homeopaths have already celebrated “200 years of homeopathy” at least three times within the last twenty years – corresponding to important stages in the development and foundation of homeopathy by Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843). In 1990 it was commemorated that 200 years ago, in 1790, Hahnemann made his famous experiment on his own body with Peruvian bark which was later considered to be the “rosy dawn” (aurora) of the homeopathic idea. 1996 marked 200 years since the basic principles of homeopathy, drug proving on healthy humans and treatment according to “similia similibus”, were published by Hahnemann for the first time (in 1796). In 2007 the term “homeopathic” finally had its 200th birthday: It was introduced by Hahnemann in 1807. The noun “homeopathy”, however, was not coined and published by Hahnemann until 1810, and also the constituting maxime of homeopathy “similia similibus curentur” was first published in its complete version in the “Organon of rational therapeutics”. Hence, in 1810, homeopathy acquired a basic textbook and a distinctive label, thus constituting itself as an entity of its own.

The fact that the title of the first edition of the Organon, published in 1810, read “Organon of rational therapeutics”, while all the following editions (2–6) bear the title “Organon of the art of healing”, may give a first hint that the development of homeopathy cannot be said to have been completed by 1810. In fact, a comparative look at the different editions may disclose various changes of concepts and theories in the development of the Organon rather than a continuity of attitude and approach which does, of course, also exist but is more difficult to unravel. Homeopaths who are in the possession of the last (sixth) edition only, may also get a sense of this problem, when studying it profoundly. Irritations and putative contradictions arising from a critical reading can often be resolved by demonstrating that Hahnemann, when revising the content of the Organon five times, was not always totally consequent in eliminating old

concepts and substituting them by new ones. So, although the *Organon* – throughout its six editions – has become what was called the Bible of homeopathy, it is equally true that for most people the basic reference book of homeopathy has remained to be a kind of book of seven seals.

In order to shed a new light on the content of the *Organon*, let us try to take a step back to get a broader perspective from where upon we may be able to put it into a historic and philosophic context.

Historical perspectives

From time immemorial – due to the precarious condition of existence of human beings – the motive to heal people has been a perennial challenge, something like an anthropological basic constant. It can be found in all epochs of history and on all continents of the world. This goal, however, – whether inspired by compassion, worship, curiosity, or convention – can be and actually was pursued and achieved in very different ways. As history of medicine shows, concepts, terms, and theories of how to cure people were varying widely – depending on time, place, intellectual climate, socio-economic incentives, and cultural and political circumstances. Seen from a historic bird's-eye view, e.g. it was not by chance that homeopathy emerged in 18th and 19th century Germany. In fact, it would not have fitted with Greek antiquity, Western middle ages, traditional Chinese culture, or the like.

In the wake of major political, social, and economic changes, such as the French Revolution, emancipation of citizens, and early industrialisation, and of intellectual movements, such as enlightenment, German Idealism, and German Romanticism, especially in Germany towards the turn of the century a remarkable culture of critical and profound thinking had evolved. As if triggered by an ever rising relevance of economic rationalizing, not only scientists and physicians, but even theologians and philosophers tried to expand the realm of rationality within their fields as far as possible. (Since the term “ratio” derives from the commercial rendering of accounts, “rationalism” may be seen as the triumph of money – as a form of thinking – over all realms of life). While Kant e.g. claimed to have elevated metaphysics to the rank of a true (rational) science, many physicians (as well as philosophers and artists) were anxious to achieve the same for medicine.

Against this background and within this context, Hahnemann's lifework, i.e. the finding, foundation, and further development of homeopathy, may now be contemplated and assessed: from his first vision of the principle of similars in 1790 up to his completion of the sixth edition of the *Organon* in 1842. In this way, the first edition, published in 1810, may possibly lose some of its alleged status as an outstanding dogmatic landmark, let alone a kind of holy scripture. It will rather turn out to have been one of several transitional stages within a busy literary and medical career.

Philosophical perspectives

Apart from taking into account the regional and cultural circumstances, influences, and biases of his time and contemporaries (a fast field for medical historical research), it is

equally important for a clear understanding of Hahnemann's work to consider another, more philosophical problem with which any discoverer of anything new and unheard-of is confronted. It belongs to the paradoxes of the human condition that language, logic, and concepts do allow humans to communicate their thoughts and opinions to other fellow-beings, but at the same time language, logic, and concepts limit the content of what is communicable to others at all. As a rule, ordinary people are only able to perceive, experience, and grasp those things for which they have (firstly) a sense and (secondly) also a basic concept in their minds. E.g. without having a concept of a chair we would not be able to recognise any chair in this (or any other) room, in fact, we would not even know what to look for, etc. Everything else, e.g. sense qualities of bats, bees, or eels, or spiritual or mystic insights of saints, etc., will drop through the meshes of our perception and understanding and will thus remain unknown to us.

Given the case, that somebody has discovered something that is truly new and unheard-of, be it by chance, intuition, abduction, revelation, providence or the like, – in order to communicate this to his people, has no other option than to try to express it by means of common language, logic, and concepts. If it were possible to easily grasp and communicate it by these means, however, it would probably have been discovered long before. The very fact that it is really new and unheard-of, plainly suggests that it must have been beyond the scope of common language, logic, and concepts. History contains many examples of how philosophers, writers, and also physicians occasionally had to challenge the borders of language or even to create a complementary or alternative terminology for their new approaches.

Unlike e.g. Paracelsus, who could relatively undisturbed develop his own world of concepts along with his alchemistic, astrological, and therapeutic findings (most of his books were published posthumously, anyway), Hahnemann – living 300 years later – was more openly obliged to comply with the conceptual standards and fashions of his time. Although modern peer-review procedures were not yet set up – to be admitted to publish an article e.g. in Hufeland's Journal or to find a publisher for a book on medicine, certainly was not possible without talking the same language as that of one's colleagues and sharing their scientific interests. Empirical details could be reported at will, as long as the linguistic, logical, and conceptual framework was understandable to the common reader. This is why Hahnemann used terms like organism, life-force, life-principle, dynamic, potencies, agencies, remedies, miasms, causes of disease, signs, symptoms, etc., and also why he never stopped working on their relationship and meaning during his long life of practicing and writing. Had Hahnemann lived today, in order to get access to a peer reviewed medical journal he would – like everybody – certainly have to comply with writing in terms of modern science, such as immunology, epigenetics, cybernetics, etc. As far as possible, however, he would probably use progressive concepts as well, such as complexity, semiotics, systems-theory, etc.

In order to put the "Organon of rational therapeutics", whose 200th anniversary is celebrated this year, into the context of Hahnemann's striving for recognition by his contemporaries, let us now have a closer look at the way he modified his presentation of and argumentation for his cause in the course of more than 50 years.

Behind various ostensible shifts of perspective, emphasis, and concepts, one may eventually detect a largely continuous development of a basic idea and conception –

embedded, to be sure, in some theoretical and terminological discontinuities. The task will be to abstract or to abduct, among the irritating and contradicting concepts, the original vision or experience that inspired Hahnemann's entire life – so to speak, the non-verbal essence of homeopathy which should be expressible in more than one theoretical framework and be transferable to different times and languages.

Early writings of Hahnemann (1790–1809)

In 1790, in his translation of William Cullen's *materia medica*, Hahnemann, in view of his proving of Peruvian bark, started out to draw the attention of the reader to his observation that "substances which arouse a kind of fever extinguish the types of intermittent fever" (JMS 29).

Referring to this early statement, in a publication in Hufeland's *Journal*, in 1796, Hahnemann presented himself as a "true physician having the perfection of his art at heart", hence concentrating on nothing but two questions: 1. What pure effects do medicines bring forth in healthy human bodies? and 2. What do their effects in distinct diseases teach us? (GKS 222). Rejecting all other (indirect) sources of medicinal knowledge, such as chemistry, botany, animal experiments, etc., Hahnemann advocated drug provings on healthy humans and treatment according to the principle "similia similibus". However, if a basic cause of a disease, such as a taeniafuge, was known, its elimination would be the "via regia" of the art of healing. If no basic cause was known, i.e. in the majority of cases, antipathic treatment (treatment by the contrary) would be suitable only in acute diseases. Chronic diseases, on the other hand, were to be treated with so-called "specifics", i.e. remedies which have practically proven their usefulness in similar cases. For any state of disease there should be a specific remedy (GKS 220f.). What was striking in this early publication, was Hahnemann's uncompromising pragmatic attitude toward his practical goal of healing human beings, resulting in a differentiated and balanced handling of the causal and phenomenologic approach.

In another publication in Hufeland's *Journal*, in 1797, Hahnemann for the first time distinguished between "dynamically" and "chemically" acting medicines (GKS 265), while in 1800, in his translation of Richard Pearson's *Thesaurus medicaminum*, he contrasted "dynamic" with "mechanic" (JMS 64) and in 1801, in Hufeland's *Journal*, with "atomic" (GKS 349).

In 1801, again in Hufeland's *Journal*, Hahnemann introduced his conception of "fixed diseases" which have a stable cause, e.g. a "quite invariable miasm", like syphilis or psora, and a similar course. All other diseases, infinitely different in their symptoms, had to be considered as individuals (GKS 321). "In practically useful regard" Hahnemann also distinguished "material" and "dynamic" causes of diseases. If a material cause, such as a splinter, a foreign body, or a gall-stone, could be detected and eliminated, this should be done. Since dynamic causes were not known in their essence, however, – even if one knew their names, like psora, syphilis, or smallpox – they could not be treated directly (GKS 326f.).

Also in these publications Hahnemann presented himself as a decidedly practical physician who emphasized a distinction between dynamic and material (or chemical, mechanic, atomic), because this distinction seemed to him to have direct therapeutic consequences.

In 1805, in Hufeland's Journal, Hahnemann presented his doctrine under the heading "Therapeutics of experience". Once more he pointed out that some diseases may have one and the same cause (e.g. a miasm): these may be called "peculiar diseases", bear single names, and be treated with the same remedy. All the rest of the diseases, however, were in-homogenous and innumerable, and had to be considered and treated as individuals consisting of a unique combination of manifold influences in this person under these circumstances. In casetaking the physician should ask for basic causes as well as for exciting causes (GKS 390–392). – Aside from these practical hints, however, the publication was dominated by Hahnemann's attempt to found and theoretically explain his doctrine – in terms of contemporary concepts. For this (academic) purpose he had to resort e.g. to a stimulus theory in order to explain the principle of similars: pathogenic and medicinal stimuli (potencies) provoke diseases: if they are dissimilar, they suspend each other; if they are similar, they extinguish each other (GKS 395–398). By means of a semiotic theory he tried to substantiate his phenomenological approach toward the many individual diseases: since the inner essence of any disease reveals itself through signs and symptoms, they are "the disease itself" (GKS 392). To justify why a knowledge of all signs and symptoms really suffices for healing every individual disease, Hahnemann had to take refuge in teleological and metaphysic concepts: God, the wise and beneficial creator of humankind, guarantees that also under the condition of a limited perception humans must be able to cure (GKS 390). "Therapeutics" was now defined as a "science of experience" (GKS 390) and ostensible healings by non-curative remedies were denied (GKS 405).

In this publication of 1805, which was the forerunner of the Organon, we find Hahnemann embarking into the scientific discourse of his time, obviously under pressure to explain and sustain in current academic terms what he was practically doing for more than ten years. With the claim of conforming to science the necessity arose to give reasons for everything. Since any proof or argumentation is based on premises, however, Hahnemann was ultimately forced to introduce – as the ultimate premise – theological topics into his medical writings.

In 1807, again in Hufeland's Journal, Hahnemann coined and defined the term "homeopathic" (GKS 461), complained that the "truth" of curative healing was not yet "scientifically recognized", and called his doctrine "the most rational and perfect way of healing" (GKS 472). Up to this publication, the term "rational" was used by Hahnemann just casually, e.g. when he spoke of the "more rational modern times" in 1797 (GKS 264), a „rational physician“ in 1800 (JMS 65), or the "rational use" of coffee in 1803 (GKS 364). From this time, however, when Hahnemann entered into a phase of defending his doctrine as an entity, the term "rational" – as well as "truth" – became increasingly important to him.

At the same time, in a series of articles in a popular journal for a broader public (AAdD), Hahnemann still kept his distance from the traditional sciences. In 1808 he stressed that since the way "vitality" works is not reducible to any mechanical, physical, or chemical measure (GKS 503), the wise physician confines himself to a "knowledge of vitality by experience" (GKS 505). In 1809 he recommended to a student the "study of medicine" – but only because "one has to know, what concepts people who consider themselves smart physicians have of all the things which they do not understand" (GKS 531).

On the other hand, in an open letter to Hufeland, in 1808, Hahnemann tried to reconstruct the accomplishment of his discovery in a picture as consistent and incontestable as possible, drawing heavily on teleological arguments. In this context, for the first time he called his new therapeutic maxime a “law of nature” (GKS 495) and compared his difficulty in being recognized by dogmatics with Luther’s case (GKS 498). In 1809, finally, Hahnemann performed a significant change of meaning in his terminology: for the present, the term “art of healing” was used pejoratively, while the term “therapeutics” had become the new ideal (GKS 540).

The six editions of the Organon (1810–1842)

Hahnemann’s high valuation of the terms “rational” and “therapeutics” during that period may certainly have influenced the title of this work, whose 200th anniversary is to be celebrated this year: the “Organon of rational therapeutics”, published in 1810.

In this work Hahnemann introduced the noun “homeopathy” and for the first time presented the full formula of the basic maxime of homeopathy: “similia similibus curentur” (Org 1: p. v). Leaning on a quotation from Francis Bacon first mentioned in 1805 (GKS 370), the “art of healing” was now denounced as having been a “conjectural art” – until Hahnemann’s revision had brought forth the “beneficial truth” (Org 1: p. i–iv). Hahnemann’s own ambition was “rationally curing”, i.e. “according to fixed reasons” (p. v). His doctrine was claimed to rest upon the “homeopathic law of cure” (p. vii, xxxi), the “homeopathic law of nature” (p. xviii, 21), the “exception-less law of homeopathy” (§ 199), and some more “special laws of rational therapeutics” (§ 200). Regarding the examples of involuntary homeopathic cures by former physicians he even spoke of “homeopathic causal connections” (p. xlvi). The stimulus theory advocated in 1805 was now replaced by the idea that “the organism obtains a special tuning from the disease” and cannot receive a second one without having to abandon the first (§ 21). Drug proving was explained entirely in Cartesian terms: “medicinal substances produce disease symptoms, according to special laws” (§ 89).

In 1810, more than in 1805, Hahnemann was obviously concerned about fitting his knowledge and insights into the stock of scientific terms and concepts. In this way, his more practical findings almost sank into insignificance, like his further differentiation between fixed, individual, and collective diseases (§ 48–60) and his elaboration of the conception of “vicariation” as a warning to treat local symptoms without curing the “inner disease”, such as syphilis or psora (§ 173–175).

The problem of the attempt to grasp phenomena of the living in terms of rationality, is its tendency to generalisation and dogmatism. Indeed, in 1813, in an article in the popular journal already mentioned (AAdD), Hahnemann even claimed that nature acts according to the (homeopathic) “laws” – “with mathematical certainty” “in all cases”. Homeopathy was asserted to be the most “certain, reliable, gentle, quick, and lasting way” of healing (GKS 647).

In 1819, the second edition of the Organon appeared under the title “Organon of the art of healing”. In the preface Hahnemann stated several times that his subject is the “art of healing”, with “true art of healing” being conceptualized as a “pure science of experience” (Org 2: p. 6–14). The term “rational”, so prominent in the first edition, was now consequently erased from the entire book, except in one footnote where it was used

to denounce the errors of the old “rational” school (§ 6). This ostracism of the term “rational” was maintained through all the subsequent editions of the *Organon*. The same change of attitude may also be seen in a subtle shift of wording in the section 1: In 1810 the starting point and subject was “the physician” who had a “goal”. From 1819 to 1842, however, the emphasis was put on the new subject, the “calling” “of the physician”, putting the physician into the genitive. In addition, a new footnote to this section from now on served as an explicit demarcation from academic theorizing, as professors of “theoretic medicinal art” used to indulge in (§ 1). While in the first edition a teleologic poem from Gellert was on the title page, this was now substituted by the motto “aude sapere” (dare to know) – whereby “sapere” not only means “knowing”, but also “smelling”, i.e. a sensual activity that may not entirely be translatable into rational concepts.

The terms and concepts used in this edition to give Hahnemann’s medical colleagues an idea of what homeopathy is about, seem less Cartesian-academic and closer to the phenomena. Diseases e.g. were now described as “spiritual detunements (derangements) of our life in feelings and activities” or “immaterial detunements (derangements) of our well-being” (§ 53). At the same time, however, he kept claiming (up to the sixth edition) that his doctrine was based on the homeopathic “law of nature” (§ 20, 43, 65, 116, 142) or “healing law of nature” (p. 53, § 45). Practically relevant was Hahnemann’s suggestion to ask patients for a former infection with specific miasms, such as syphilis, psora, or sycosis (!), since the local symptom, i.e. the chancre or the skin rash, may have disappeared and with it the completeness of the picture (§ 228).

The third edition of the *Organon*, published in 1824, was a largely unaltered copy of the second. Still, Hahnemann inserted an approving comment on mesmerism (§ 319–320) and some extensions of practical rules for the treatment of chronic diseases (§ 108b, 167b). Sycosis was already depicted very sharply, as an inner disease with specific local and secondary symptoms, henceforth taking its place besides psora and syphilis. For the treatment of psora Hahnemann suggested the internal use of the best “antipsoric remedy”, thus using the term “antipsoric” here for the first time (§ 220).

In 1828, Hahnemann published his monograph on the nature and treatment of Chronic Diseases. As he wrote, since 1816 he had been working on this issue – i.e. since the time between the first and second edition of the *Organon*, when he abandoned the term “rational therapeutics” and embraced the ideal “art of healing” instead. Based on his usual concepts of fixed diseases, vicariation, and original and exciting causes, Hahnemann now attributed all chronic diseases to a former infection with a chronic miasm (psora, syphilis, or sycosis) and claimed that these could only be healed homeopathically. The fact, however, that psora was conceptualized to be the most infectious and versatile disease, persisting – without cure – lifelong, like a “parasite” (CK 1, 14), had the far-reaching consequence that virtually nobody would be free if it. (Hahnemann considered himself to be one of very few exceptions, CK 1.57). Up to the psora theory, normality had consisted of healthy people occasionally becoming ill. Now (almost) everybody had to be considered to be chronically ill, at least in a latent state, and unable to recover without homeopathic aid.

In the fourth edition of the *Organon*, published in 1829, the paradigmatic changes resulting from psora theory had to be incorporated and digested. One of the main

concepts helping Hahnemann to explain why the average human would be ill and not healthy, was the “life force”. While in the first edition of the *Organon* this term appeared only once (Org 1: § 227), in the second edition twice (Org 2: § 75, 287), in the third edition ten times (Org 3: § 75, 287, 319, 320), and even in the *Chronic Diseases*, in 1828, only three times (CK 1.2, 1.86, 3.49), always just in a general unspecific sense, – in the fourth edition Hahnemann used it 76 times (Org 4: p. iv–vi, xii, 9, 15, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 32, 34–41, 43, 45, 51, § 17, 24, 40, 46, 48, 60, 65, 66, 68, 72, 105, 142, 191, 202, 280, 291, 292), in the fifth edition 139 times, and in the sixth edition 106 times.

In contrast to his former use of the term “life-force” as a metaphoric synonym for “nature” or “organism”, Hahnemann now distinguished between “wise” “big nature itself” and the “mere individual nature of the organic human”, i.e. the “instinctive, unreasonable life-force” which – once detuned – acts “blindly”, “automatically”, and “inappropriately” and whose “efforts are itself illness” (p. iii–vi). This, of course, should not be imitated. On the contrary, the “art of healing” required the “higher human spirit”, “free deliberation”, and “reasoning” (p. 41), to “retune” (homeopathically) the “detuned life-force”. Only from now on was disease defined as “detunement (derangement) of the life-force” (p. 9, § 24, 40) and chronic miasms were considered to be the “biggest tormentors of humans” (§ 71).

The fifth edition of the *Organon*, published in 1833, was mainly governed by issues of confrontation and demarcation, such as Hahnemann’s significantly harsher attacks on allopathy (Org 5: p. iii–x), but also his new delimitation of homeopathy against “isopathy” (p. 67–70, § 56), against a putative “sect of bastard-homeopaths” (p. ix, § 67, 149, 246), and against a new group of “self-conceited beginners” and converts (§ 253). In the course of a new tightening of homeopathic identity from now on he claimed homeopathy to be the “only true art of healing” (§ 109, 143), just as “between two points there is only one straight line” (§ 54, 109), and suggested using the 30c-potency as a standard dose (§ 270, 246, 287), especially in the form of “smelling” (§ 288, 285). Outbidding his former assessments, Hahnemann now estimated the number of chronic diseases at 99% (p. v). In the sixth edition, however, he once again reduced his guess to “the majority of diseases” (p. 2, § 204).

The sixth edition of the *Organon*, completed by Hahnemann as a manuscript in 1842, contained almost no change of concepts and ideas in principle. From a practical point of view, however, there were a number of relevant modifications of Hahnemanns doctrine presented for the first time. The most surprising was his description of a new and more sophisticated way of potentization, i.e. the manufacture of what was later called q-potencies (Org 6: § 270–271) – together with new directions for dosage and intervals of prescribing and rules for following-up cases, including the description of a new kind of (late) aggravation (§ 280–282). Contrary to the editions 3–5, Hahnemann no longer considered mesmerism as a mere “auxiliary aid” which could “act homeopathically” but not perform a “lasting cure” (Org 3: § 319; Org 4: § 291; Org 5: § 293). Rather mesmerism was now granted the peer status of an “invaluable gift of God”, equally able to “extinguish the detunement (derangement) of the life-force” (§ 288). Hahnemann also admitted – under certain circumstances – the usefulness of the application of magnets, electricity, and galvanism (§ 286–287), as well as of massages and baths (§ 290–291). For the first time Hahnemann also included his vision of homeopathic hospitals and education into the *Organon* (§ 2719).

Conclusion and outlook

It may have become clear now that the “Organon of rational therapeutics”, published in 1810, cannot be adequately understood and judged without considering its context. With the first edition of the Organon homeopathy neither began nor ended. On the contrary, its position seems to be rather in the middle of Hahnemann’s literary and practical lifework. Basic principles of homeopathy, i.e. drug proving and treatment by similars, were already founded by 1796, and fundamental concepts, such as “dynamic”, “fixed disease”, “miasm”, and original and exciting causes were developed in 1796, 1797, 1801, and 1805, respectively. Various scientific theories were drawn upon to make the new method plausible, understandable, and acceptable to academic physicians in 1805. Even the name “homeopathic” had been coined no later than 1807. Compared to these preliminaries, the particular achievement of the first edition of the Organon was little more than a strict alignment with the hype of rationality prevailing in those days.

On the other hand, formal similarities of the six editions of the Organon – if viewed in a superficial, somewhat naive manner – may give rise to the impression that all Organon editions (1–6) were basically one book – just having been republished at different times, with some corrections added. A deeper, comparative look at the same six editions, however, may allow them to appear in a different light. Each of them may seem to have virtually adopted a kind of individual personality: from the first, most ambitious and rationalistic edition, to the second, more artistic and phenomenologic, to the third, almost unaltered, to the fourth, which was completely determined by the psora theory, to the fifth, the most pugnacious and delimitating, to the sixth, probably the most pragmatic and balanced one. Each of them, to be sure, corresponded to a typical phase in Hahnemann’s life and development, his social conditions, and intellectual environment. After starting out to impress the readers of his first Organon by means of the rationalistic claim to make medicine a natural science in 1810, Hahnemann recollected himself to embrace anew the ideal of medicine as an “art of healing” in 1819, had almost nothing to add to this in 1824, performed and assimilated a big paradigmatic change in 1829, defended his doctrine against various threats and false friends in 1833, and – meanwhile living in Paris – perfected in a practical respect his life’s work in 1842.

Nevertheless, the six editions of the Organon are not only different, but at the same time also connected by a kind of powerful invisible thread. It is Hahnemann’s basic idea of an art of healing that, on the one hand, attempts to stick as close to the sick human and primary phenomena (disturbed well-being/feeling, detuned vitality, remedies as potencies to influence these states, etc.) as possible, and, on the other hand, strives to find tools, rules, or laws that make the highly demanding practice of medicine certain and reliable.

If one admits this basic idea to be the core of the spirit of Hahnemann pervading all his writings, all his practice, and all his research, there still remains the need to translate this vague and fuzzy vision into concrete terms and concepts: a challenge which Hahnemann met and accepted in a pioneering way all through his life. The fact that he had to comply with theories, ideas, and conceptions of his time and contemporaries, does not at all impair his achievements. On the contrary: Instead of criticizing or deconstructing

Hahnemann's dependence on contemporary conditions, homeopaths should rather engage in carrying on the noble and beneficial intention into the 21st century, trying to translate the perennial mission of true medicine into the language of modern science, humanities, and philosophy.

Only if one actually tried to write a seventh (or eighth) edition of the Organon, would one possibly realize how much Hahnemann had already accomplished in the previous six.

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