

Simplifying homeopathy

Key words

Balancing opposites. Too much information. Sophistication and simplicity. Context. More groups. Second and Third Dimension. Rocks. Gemstones. Sarcodes. Bacteria and Viruses. Fungi.

Times have changed.

During the almost 30 years that I have been immersed in homeopathy it developed both in what I call the Grammar (the system) and the Vocabulary (the Materia Medica) at an enormous speed. How utterly simple homeopathy in our beginning days seems looking at it from our current perspective! Since then system upon system and method upon method have been launched, all to help us cope with the ever increasing complexity of our analysis and the unmanageable amount of remedies we are supposed to know, or at least be able to find.

At the same time strangely enough homeopathy in the society found itself attacked and suppressed. As a result of the resulting decline, homeopaths have turned to self-inquiry and understood that they are part of the problem. Indignantly pointing fingers at external forces wanting to destroy homeopathy didn't seem to justify the whole story.

The search for balance in a period of transition

We have to admit we have issues too. And what is more: they turned out to be similar (...) to the issues of them 'out there'. This made clear fighting the external enemy won't help if we can't stop the war in our own heads and restore balance in homeopathy.

Indeed homeopathy displays (oh, surprise!) the same flaws we so readily see in 'them'. If we think the world is heading to extinction because of greed, power games and righteousness of others we can't but admit that our own behavior, no matter how noble our motivation, shows a suspect amount of the same. We feel we are right and in that respect better than the ignorant or –even worse- corrupt others. We draw heavily on masculine qualities like knowledge, belief in facts, systems, methods and procedures. Isn't it remarkable that a professional group consisting of an overwhelming percentage of female practitioners has almost exclusively male teachers and gurus? We can't blame the men for that, as we, ladies, give just as much importance to men and masculine qualities as the society we live in.

Therefore we admitted the need to balance masculine and feminine qualities in our profession, meaning that not only system and knowledge have their place but they should be complemented by receptivity and intuition.¹

As a community we sometimes debate what good all those novelties, new remedies, yet another new system do as the classical homeopathy is actually doing very well. But again: it's the pioneers' role to explore new territories while the traditional community holds their ground until new and better paths are discovered and become accessible to all. We need both to keep an equilibrium

¹ Vervarcke, Anne: 'Exploring New Territories, Homeopathic Links, vol. 28, 3/2015, pp 195-198.

between tradition and innovation.

So there is one more thing we need to balance: the exponential increase of sophistication combined with an underlying simplicity. Isn't all wisdom to be reduced to very simple rules and truths?

This will allow homeopathy to find a balance, a homeostasis as it were, in the never ending fluctuations and challenges in an evolving environment

Those were the days

There is a world of difference between what we taught our students 30 years ago and nowadays. In the past we studied a manageable number of remedies, the archetypical 'polychrests' and numerous 'small' remedies, mainly for clinical prescriptions. Whatever remedy we needed, we could find in the Repertory.

Today as grouping of remedies in *Kingdoms*, *Levels of Experience* and new *Miasm* theory as a *classification of delusions* are introduced, meant to be helpful in analyzing a case, the result is we have a gigantic number of possible remedies at our disposition. But what I observe is that nowadays students (and we are all eternal students) get crushed under too much information. It is simply impossible to think of everything at the same time: what level is the patient talking from, what kingdom could it be, is he compensating or not, is the word used a 'sensation' word or a common expression, is it 'miasm' language or 'sensation' language, could it be a remedy I don't know, maybe even an unknown kingdom, is the patient on 'source level' or just imagining, what could this hand gesture point to, does what he's telling belong to his 'state' or his 'story', what information can I use when he keeps talking psychobabble???, etc, etc.

In the past we used to collect some symptoms and some Keynotes, called it 'the totality' and look them up in the Repertory. Those were the days!

Since the only way is forward: more information is bound to come. New provings, new systems, new insights.

We arrived at a point that homeopaths don't even want to hear about it. Can there be anything more disheartening than a homeopathic seminar on let's say 'Spider Remedies' taking off with the statement 'there are about 45.000 species of Spiders' or a lectures on Fungi with the information from Frans Vermeulens' book 'that of the approximately 200.000 species up to now 70.000 are listed'. Some stop practicing in despair because they feel they just can't do it, some narrow their treatment down to a clear procedure with a very restricted number of remedies presented by one teacher and forget about the rest.

I understand.

It's a survival mechanism.

New boxes, new labels

Others react initially with enthusiasm when they learn about new systematics promising to make analysis easier... only to find out that in the long run it doesn't. Three Big Kingdom-boxes is not enough, knowing 45 Plant families won't do and there are more groups of Animals than the familiar Snakes, Spiders, Birds and Mammals to choose from. Not to mention those 200.000 Fungi.... We end up in the same situation where we found ourselves 30 years ago: trying to fit the patient in the boxes we know. Then the boxes had polychrest labels, now they carry labels like 'Mammal', 'Solanaceae', 'Spider', 'Row Five'... but basically we are in the same situation.

Some thought the solution was in guiding the patient to his hypothetical *deepest levels* where he would verbalize his remedy: an exciting new possibility. And yes, some patients when encouraged enough actually did. But despite the wonderful examples of those *Source cases*, the majority of homeopaths failed in the majority of their cases to reach that level (though a minority lived in the delusion they succeeded). It didn't look like a successful way out; the patient isn't very likely to give the Source information if he needs an *Achyranthes splendens*, *Stychodactyla gigantea* or a *Helodrilus Caliginosus*, even when we have the remedies on our shelves. It should cause a slight suspicion when a method elucidates almost always names of known animals, plants or processes but never unknown species or phenomena (not even when it is a famous polychrest like *Lycopodium* or *Staphisagria*)

It's in the Context

How then to base our prescriptions on solid ground? I noticed the last few years my articles and lectures over and again emphasized the importance of the context in the case. All participants invariably nod their heads because it's so self-evident, only to afterwards completely disregard it in their practice. Often one is so eager to find a '*sensation*' or at least '*something deep*', or meaningful that with the nose on the details the overview is lost. My first question to the audience after interrupting a live case for a provisional first analysis always is: "What kind of patient we had in front of us? What kind of case?" Surprisingly this seems to be the hardest question of all attested by the remarkable silence that follows. If an answer comes, it's more often than not an attempt to dissect the patient psychologically, in other words projections of the speaker.

Recently I showed a case of a 58 old woman with depression and some physical complaints. I asked the participants what impression she made on them. Answers varied from 'friendly', 'submissive', 'sickly', 'chaotic', 'arrogant', 'impatient' to 'worn out' and 'desperate', thereby displaying their own projections. The answer I was waiting for was 'beautiful'. She was a natural beauty, with a flattering, special haircut and a gorgeous smile. Because we're too busy to probe into her psychology we are blind for the very obvious. Another day a lawyer came in, wearing garden trousers and his hair in a ponytail. If the remedy he'll leave the room with doesn't explain this, we haven't got the right one! Or what the child that leaves the consultation room and roams about the whole house or building, opening every door? The child that blows a whistle during the whole consultation you are trying to have with his mother? The patient who is irritated by every question you ask? The prescriptions *must* explain and include this behavior.

You've got the point.

What context means and how far reaching its importance is, goes beyond the scope of this article but basically it is an answer to the question: "*Who is saying what when and how?*"

If this is left out of the analysis it is bound to lack coherence and cohesion and hence any chance to come up with a suitable remedy. Nevertheless the patient didn't conceal anything, it is indeed impossible for him to hide his state. The observation of this state often stays implicit knowledge and isn't used in the analysis, while I think it is *the* determining factor. The context information is our *main tool to simplify homeopathy* to the point where it becomes manageable again, without losing its complexity. Let me attempt to explain.

Waterproof pointers

We'd agree we would be helped a lot with waterproof pointers to groups of remedies. Many master homeopaths gave keywords, hints, indications and clues and they all help us to some extent. If we could combine them, boil them down to the most reliable sure indicators to, if not the species, then at least the group in which the species must be searched for, it would simplify our analysis substantially.

Therefore I'd want to introduce using the context information and the division into Second and Third dimension. It occurred to me that there is a clear distinction between those two big groups of remedies.

We are multidimensional beings but in everyday reality on planet earth we deal with only a few. Under our feet is the 2nd (the First Dimension being the iron crystal in the center of the earth, with which the iron in our blood resonates): all the elements, ores, stones, gems, rocks and simple organisms like bacteria.² To this list I'd add the Sarcodes, Nosodes and Carbons as 'simple organisms' as well. The 3rd Dimension is the realm of plants, fungi, animals and humans.

These dimensions have distinct characteristics and if we can come to a conclusion as to which one our patient belongs early in the case, the possibilities are already divided in half.

Characteristics of the second dimension.

When only three Kingdoms are considered, then the Minerals get following features assigned: the sensation of being incomplete and the need to complete themselves. The feeling is that the person is needing, lacking or losing something in order to be complete. While this is correct is it not the whole story and it doesn't belong to the Elements (what we call Minerals) only. As a matter of fact: the pure Elements are rarely found on earth. What we dig up are mixtures of elements in the forms of 'earth' and stones. While it is true the elements are the building blocks for all other phenomena, they seldom appear in their unmixed form. The reason why we prescribe them so much is probably simply because we possess something solid scientific and limited as the Periodic Table. It meant a great starting point to categorize our homeopathic remedies in groups and families.

But! What is under our feet is way more divers; we should be able to distinguish between those subgroups with reliable and easy to recognize indications.

The first challenge is to differentiate Second from Third Dimension. What I've observed is that no homeopathic student who witnessed this in life cases in practice later met any difficulty to do this at home. Once you've seen it, you'll know.

The key word for the Second Dimension is 'Existence', where as in the Third it would be 'Life' and although it is essentially the same, the experience is completely different. Second Dimension patients will have the sensation (fear, delusion, dream) of 'existential emptiness'. They feel unstable, incomplete indeed, heavy, insecure, dependent. They will probably talk about their capacity and we used to say as soon as the patient starts claiming 'I can't', you can pin him down in the Second Dimension. Of course this is jumping to conclusions; nevertheless one is surprised how often it still holds true after 2 hours of careful questioning. This capacity can be about function, possession, power, strength, security, performance. Interestingly there is also a quite distinct context in the anamnesis that will turn out to be very helpful in analysis.

Often the cases are more or less simple (not to be understood as: the patients are simpletons!), the

² Gold, Thomas: 'The Deep Hot Biosphere', Copernicus Books, NY, 2001.

problem can usually be boiled down to one sentence, the patients gives more or less factual information, without much facial or bodily expression and –this may sound surprising until you realize others don't- they answer your question, often with a kind of definition. The homeopath is permitted to do so, in fact they probably will wait for your questions, while with Third Dimension cases, you might not even get a chance to maneuver one in the verbiage .

Second Dimension patients seem a bit aloof; kind of distant, a bit reserved; even when warm personalities, there is something sober about the whole case, and in extreme cases merely boring.

Third Dimension, the surface of the earth shared by Plants, Animals and Humans.

Not so in Third Dimension case. Oh, how we like those patients! They are much livelier, relate to the homeopath ('how's your daughter? What a nice shawl you are wearing! Is your mother better?') and they drag you in their stories right away. Your opening question "What can I do for you?" or "what brought you here?" might be a sign to takeoff for a three quarters of an hour explanation on how they feel and why this is so.

To determine the dimension, this in itself should do.

Sometimes the patient warms up a bit slower but still there are feelings all over the place: in every lively example, description, image or story. In the beginning of the anamnesis the homeopath feels sympathy for the patient, as he understands how he feels but as the time passes a growing sense of despair starts creeping in. More stories, more examples, more symptoms and modalities, more sensitivities will make him ending up with the famous Kentian quote: '10 pages of notes but no case'. Cheer up: you've already determined the dimension! While Animal remedies often are compensated for obvious reasons, still there will be this body language, this complexity, this engagement, this multitude and this intensity you've missed in Second Dimension cases.

Subgroups of the Second Dimension.

But things get a bit more complicated when we want to differentiate another group of the Second Dimension. If it is Mineral, it is not that difficult, as long as we remember to prescribe on the situation 'as if', not on the actual situation. If a child behaves like a child, no reason to give Calcarea. When a teenager behaves like a teenager: don't give Silica. This applies to all prescriptions but somehow we tend to forget it in the Mineral kingdom more often.

When it is not a Mineral, it can be a Rock or a Stone, a Gemstone, an Organic Carbon, a Bacterium, a Virus or a Sarcode. They all sound like Minerals but they are not because we can't situate the issue of the patient anywhere on the Periodic Table. It seems to be absent or distributed over several rows and columns.

Mixed issues

This in itself should make our minds go to Stones or Rocks. They will display Mineral traits like the lacking, needing, losing or missing something on which they base their existence, or they might even express the vital existential emptiness which is the sensation of all elements and their combinations. Often they will feel heaviness and pressure with their symptoms, need support, stability and grip, or have issues about their role, meaning, place and function in life. But you can't boil the central problem down to one thing, as is symbolized on the Periodic Table. There is some Magnesium in the

case, some Silica and Alumina but also Strontium and Titanium and you don't know what to do. Consider a Stone!

Gems

When you can't decide between a Mineral and a Plant because of the Mineral-like down to earth, detached way the patient tells his symptoms and the Plant like sensitivity, most likely the patient needs a Gemstone. As a matter of fact I even consider this as the most trustworthy pointer so far. The context of the consultation is Mineral-like, read 2nd dimensional, in the factual way of reporting, the distance, the 'cool' outside but the content is not 'mineral' at all. The issues are about feelings, without the patient displaying overt emotionality. (interestingly enough: sometimes displaying the opposite: drowning in emotionality while reporting clear Mineral themes). They can even look a bit tough or hard on the outside, but the homeopath will discover a sensitive, kind, considerate, benevolent, inside.

Bacteria

If the consultation is confusing because the patient gives you 'only facts' of his (mostly numerous) diseases and longwinded details on all the treatments, medication, supplements and diets and you can't seem to get anywhere else, be it deeper or not, the chances are the patient in front of you needs a Bacterium. Not only does the homeopath feel the inability to make the patient tell anything else than how he physically feels, if he talks about his emotions or thoughts they don't seem to go anywhere either. Normally as the consultation evolves the homeopath gets an idea of the inner map of the patient: a pattern emerges of what he thinks and feels. But in Bacteria cases, there is this feeling of fuzziness, confusion, indistinctness. Usually the homeopath ascribes this to himself but - unless he has this with all his patients- it is not him, it is the patient. He gives opinions clashing with other opinions and when the puzzled homeopath asks about this contradiction, the answer doesn't clarify, indeed: only adds to the confusion. In the end the homeopath desperately asks him: "But what DO you think? What do you stand for? What do you want?!" The answer is: the Bacterium doesn't know. He seems to have no will (hence the rubrics 'Weak Will' and 'Obsequiousness'), no ideas of his own, no center. I can assure you that once you've seen a few Bacteria cases they will be very easy to spot.

Viruses

As long as the patient talks about his diseased state, the many (not quite fitting) diagnoses of all kind of vague syndromes he has and the efforts to overcome his never ending ailments, one cannot distinguish between Bacteria or Viruses. Both share the basic issues and emphasis on food, growing and becoming strong. However the mindset is completely different. Contrary to the Bacteria the Virus is capable of explaining his ideas: usually they are abundant and outspoken as he is interested in everything. Literally. You'll find the patient started various studies, likes to go to different countries, meets all kinds of people, wants to know other solutions, other situations, other environments. You wonder where this inquisitiveness comes from, what is the motivation. If the patient is able to, he'll tell you he wants to be able to adapt to any circumstance.... Which is exactly what viruses do.

Sarcodes have this Mineral-like straightforwardness in relating their symptoms but by no means have they Mineral issues. On the contrary, their issues are rather weird, only by questioning carefully and patiently letting them explain in all detail it will become clear. They describe a function, a

system, an organization, a way of operating of their 'organism'. You'll get the details of what happens when the organ or the hormone it secretes is functioning properly and what happens when it is failing. In the same way the Bacterium's' aim is to *be normal*, the Sarcodes strives at *proper and smooth functioning*. And although they have a will of their own and know what they want, they feel they aren't really heard and at the mercy of circumstances.

And still more groups

If a patient can't possibly be categorized under one of the named groups, consider other realms. We have human artifacts and it's difficult to put them all in one group, but Coca Cola and Berlin Wall are not belonging to other groups either. We shouldn't forget the Celestial bodies, among which we have Sol and Luna proved but I also prescribed Polar star, Betelgeuse and Venus. And there are Natural Phenomena like Fire (Ignis Alcoholis), Hail, Magnetism, Electricitas, Galvanismus, Wind, Vacuum, etc, of which we have provings. Homeopathy has no limits!

Third dimension groups

Why Plants are overlooked

The three big Kingdoms in the Third Dimension shouldn't cause any difficulty to find. We know Plants are all about feelings, emotions and reacting to the surroundings.

A reason why Plant remedies are sometimes overlooked is because their Vital Sensation expresses itself in such 'common' feelings. Everything 'Plants' tell is loaded with or accompanied by a certain feeling (whether you ask for it or not) and it escapes the attention of the homeopath who is looking for something very specific, special, deep or for particular hand gestures. Impatient to go to deeper levels or frustrated because he failed, the homeopath concludes he only has superficial 'story' information, (level 3) on which he can't prescribe, disregarding the fact the patient gave Vital information throughout the consultation.

In a Plant case the 'emotion' is all there is, it IS the vital! When he is hurt: his body is hurt, his mind is hurt, his soul is hurt, on a *Vital level he becomes* the experience 'Hurt'. When he has pain, his body has pain, his mind has pain, his soul is in pain, he becomes 'Pain'. But patients talking of 'grief', 'hurt', 'violence', 'connection', 'vulnerability', 'guilt', 'pain', 'stuck', is so common we might miss the fact that they repeat it, in all examples, all situations, on all levels, and indeed it is not a Local but a Vital sensation (which is, remember: on all levels all of the time!)³. Not only is their experience the same, they will give you their way to cope with it as well (miasm). The simple observation that the patient is giving his coping up strategies from the beginning of the case and repeatedly in the consultation points to Plants as well. Plants cope up.

I retook cases which puzzled the treating homeopath who couldn't decide on the Kingdom. In many cases they turned out to be compensated Plant cases who invariably received Mineral remedies because they were distant, reserved and controlled (which are by the way not exclusively Mineral aspects). The question then should be 'what kind of 'sensation' requires this as a solution?' Obviously too much sensitivity is experienced as unbearable and needs being compensated. In general men need to compensate more as freely showing their emotions is not accepted. This means

³ Vervarcke, Anne: 'The Vital Approach', The White Room, Belgium, 2010.

we must be open to the fact that a too sensitive member of the Ranunculacea (Raw nerves, no skin!) will compensate readily, as well as for instance too fearful Apiales or Solanales.

And Animals?

We have clear Kingdom words for Animal cases which are reliable: survival, comparison, 'me versus you', not 'what' but '*who*' is the problem, desire to kill or fear to be killed, superior versus inferior and the like. We wished all Kingdoms had such clear and distinct features.

Nevertheless we sometimes overlook the compensated cases and by the way: most of the Animal cases are! It's not hard to understand why; there is no equal relationship in Animal kingdom. Even in herd animals that desperately need the protection of the group there is a domineering one at the top and a hierarchy between the members. Obviously in human relationships this is bound to cause a lot of trouble and pain. If the natural reaction is 'desire to kill', a person has only a few options: suppress, deny or compensate. Any of those will result in masquerading the Animal traits but if you take the context into account (the liveliness, the complexity, the dragging the homeopath into the story, being 'interesting' or even intriguing) you won't be fooled by the report they keep under iron control. It is a matter of life and death after all.

But what about fungi

Most of the times homeopaths have no difficulty differentiating between Animal and Plant cases. The obvious 'me or you'-theme is the confirmation and if lacking: comparison as to whom is better, richer, more beautiful, faster, stronger, powerful (etc) will do.

The third group to consider in the 3rd Dimension is the Fungi. They present an overall Plant like picture in that they won't have animal traits at all. But you won't get any clear Plant like sensation either. Instead the case will look confused, going in different directions without any specific pattern. Until it strikes you the confusion has to do with the 'context': the patient is, no matter how intelligent or successful in daily business, somehow behaving in a remarkable childish, immature way. Especially on the emotional plane, you might find a very early stage of development, before an 'ego' awareness (only to be found in the Angiosperms) emerged. Sometimes this might even lead to a kind of foolish behavior or reaction. Children, when not compensated yet, display clearly this silly attitude, often answering nonsensical. Fungi have difficulty to understand body language, meaning between the lines, social conducts and manners. Hence they are awkward and sometimes bewildered. Their fundamental fear is to be *invaded*. Adults will refuse medical (or gynecological) examinations and if it can't be prevented it will feel almost like rape. The contrary might be true as well: they might be the invaders. But, and this is important: this will be clear in the context of the consultation, less in the content, as we homeopaths always try to make sense of the words of the patient no matter how nonsensical or illogical they are. And by doing so... losing the case

Conclusion

In an endeavor to make homeopathy manageable again without losing its sophistication and precision, we need clear, simple and reliable signs to guide us in the analysis of a case. In my opinion, determining the groups and subgroups on a minimum of characteristics, forming a coherent pattern, based on context as much as on content information will be the first step in this direction. Once the subgroup is determined the repertory and software programs with their gigantic databases will lead to the right remedy we need.

May this be an invitation to the homeopaths who want to contribute in simplifying homeopathy to the point that every serious practitioner can apply the system with confidence and great results.