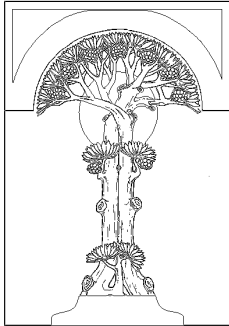


Centre for Integrative Medical Training  
In Association with London Integrated Medical Health Education



# Pre-membership Course in Medical Homeopathy

A Blended Course in Homeopathic Medicine for Healthcare Professionals

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Unit 45

P&P Studies (Organon) Week 1

## Introduction to the *Organon*

Since the *Organon* is a key reader this Semester, you may wish to review the Introductory Presentation by Dr Gabriela Rieberer, using the link overleaf.

This presentation has been provided at an earlier point in the course and, if you are already familiar with the background to the *Organon*, you can skip this introduction and move on to the closer reading for Week 1 from the *Organon* itself.

- §1-71: principles of cure in homeopathy

# An Introduction to the Organon

## What's in a Word?

### Definition

**Organon:** organ in Greek; organum (Latin) – a morphic unit, a structurally united connection of cells that is normally capable of coherently exercising a specific life-furthering function for the benefit of the greater whole



[https://youtu.be/HOgBK\\_eCMRA](https://youtu.be/HOgBK_eCMRA)



### The Title

*Organon der Heilkunst* is the title from the second to the sixth edition of Hahnemann's *Organon*, this literally translated means "Organon of the Healing Art". It is important to be aware of this, as English translations have been titled "Organon of Medicine" or most recently "Organon of the Medical Art".

Hahnemann refers to the practitioner of homeopathy as a healing artist, hence the importance of understanding the meaning of the title.

The first edition was published under the name "Organon der rationellen Heilkunde" literally meaning "Organon of rational Medicine". The change of title is more than merely a change of words and there has much theorising associated with trying to explain what Hahnemann's intention was. Clearly he has emphasised the healing art in contrast to rational medicine, which he explains in his introduction. He proclaims that homeopathy is a healing art according to clear principles which rational medicine could not claim.

### First Edition

The first edition was published in 1810, fourteen years after Hahnemann's "China experiment". Its predecessor was an essay titled "Heilkunde der Erfahrung" (Medicine of experience) which was published in 1805. In this essay we can find many of the ideas that Hahnemann expands on the *Organon*. The first edition spanned 271 paragraphs, that contained the principles and application of homoeopathic medicine.

On the title page Hahnemann quoted the following lines from von Gellert, which served as a motto:

*"The truth, which we all need, that brings us joy as humans, was covered superficially, not buried deeply, by the wise hand, that intended it for our use."*

These lines give us an insight into Hahnemann's spirit. The truth is constructed through concrete and banal observations, that are to close for us to see and thus easily escape our cognition. Hahnemann considers these concrete and banal observations and translates them into healing practice. The essence of homeopathy is its simplicity and the consideration of the banal, something we will encounter when we study homeopathy in more depth.

## Second Edition

The sale of the first edition was slow, especially in the medical profession. It was circulated in the lay world and in particular amongst Hahnemann's patients. He did not see a patient until they had read the *Organon*.

The second edition was published in 1819. Not only did the title change, but Hahnemann also chose a new motto:

*“Aude sapere”*

which was included on the title page of all the subsequent editions.

This can be translated as “have the courage to know” or “dare to be wise”. Indeed, Hahnemann was up against a hard front of opposition, and his courage, deep belief in the homeopathic principles and the favourable results of its application kept him going to perpetually question and improve homeopathy

The second edition comprised 318 paragraphs.

## Third and Fourth Editions

Successive editions appeared in short interval, the third edition was published in 1824, spanning 320 paragraphs. The fourth followed in 1829, comprising 292 paragraphs, indicating an intensive editing of the work. The major changes are the inclusion of Hahnemann's theory on chronic diseases, from his work “Chronic Diseases” which was published in 1828. Several paragraphs were omitted, that were no longer relevant to homeopathic practice as it evolved over the years.

Together with the fifth edition the fourth edition portrays a climax in homeopathic philosophy. Many of his followers turned away from him when he published his theory on chronic disease. Hahnemann was subjected to vehement polemic attacks from both his colleagues and allopaths. We will look at the controversial aspects of the fifth edition in the following section.

## Fifth Edition

The fifth edition was published in 1833. In this Hahnemann sharpened his polemic pencil and sent literary jabs out into the community of homeopaths that attacked him and into the allopathic world, true to his nickname “the raging hurricane”, which he earned as a professor at Leipzig medical school.

Not only this, but he also put forth new theories that lead to further division amongst his followers, some termed him as going senile as a result.

The major changes are as follows:

- in chronic disease a single dose of a high potency is sufficient to effect cure
- the remedy can be administered by letting the person sniff the remedy
- omission of the paragraph that allowed the use of combined remedies
- attack of his colleagues terming them “half-homoeopaths”, if they practised both allopathy and homoeopathy

## Sixth Edition

Hahnemann completed his sixth edition of the Organon in March 1843, three months prior to his death in his eight-eighth year. This edition was never published during his life-time. It was not until 1921 before the homeopathic community had access to Hahnemann's "most nearly completed version of all" (quoted from a letter Hahnemann sent to the publisher).

It is very important to bear this in mind, as Kent, who made an enormous contribution to homeopathic philosophy, never set eyes on the sixth edition with its relevant alterations.

The sixth edition was published after great efforts, in particular from the American homeopathic community. It is almost a miracle that it was not lost, as Melanie Hahnemann fled from Paris during the Franco-Prussian war with Hahnemann's writings packed up in wooden boxes, that were kept in storage on the Boeninghausen estate in Germany. Boericke purchased the sixth edition with the assistance of Richard Haehl. It has found a home in the library of the University of California in San Francisco.

In the years from the completion to the publication several fraudulent copies of the Organon were published by various people, claiming that they were Hahnemann's sixth edition. Melanie Hahnemann never published the sixth edition because of the insincere attitude of the publishers she approached, apparently she was also difficult around negotiating a price with interested purchasers.

### Changes from the 5th Edition to the 6th

- §22, 29: latest views on the life principle
- §52-56: entirely rewritten; §52 states that it is a betrayal against homeopathy to practice both homeopathy and allopathy together; §53 that true mild cures are only possible by applying homeopathy
- §60-74: addition of long footnotes
- §148: practically wholly new, concerning itself with the origin of disease
- §246-248: regard to dosage in treatment of chronic disease, repetition with potentisation – the principle of the LM potency
- §269-272: technical directions for the preparation of homeopathic medicines; LM potencies
- §273: discussing the use of combined remedies
- §282: new is footnote; treatment of chronic diseases departs absolutely from former editions – commence treatment with large doses of the remedy early in the treatment of miasmatic, chronic disease repeating the remedy several times daily in ascending potencies; local Tx of figwarts with the internal remedy

The major change in the sixth edition is the introduction of LM potencies. Homeopathy in Britain is still very much dominated by Kentian philosophy and the use of single high potencies in chronic disease. The use of LM potencies is not very widespread, with few practitioners having extensive experience of their application.

### Contents of the 6th Edition

The sixth edition, as its predecessors is structured in paragraphs or stanzas – a total of 291. There is a clear logical order in the sequence of the paragraphs, the contents of one dovetailing into the next. The structure of the Organon can be linked to a spiral – topics are re-visited throughout the text, reflecting on and illuminating different aspects of the subject.

The essential principles are stated in the first three paragraphs. In these the mission, its aim and the path to its accomplishment are formulated. The remaining paragraphs only elaborate and go into greater detail on what is outlined in § 1-3.

The following gives an overview of the contents of the Organon:

- §1-71: principles of cure in homeopathy
- §72-81: understanding diseases, ie definition of acute and chronic disease
- §81-104: case-taking
- §105-145: knowledge of medicines
- §146-203: homeopathic treatment of disease
- §204-209: chronic miasms
- §210-23-: mental and emotional diseases
- §231-244: intermittent diseases
- §245-263: case management
- §246-271: preparation of medicines
- §272-285: administration of medicines
- §286-291: other therapeutic approaches

### Translations

The Organon has been translated into 15 languages with over 100 editions world-wide. Considering that it was first published in 1810 and is still of relevance to contemporary homeopaths, speaks for the deep wisdom contained within it. No other medical textbook has enjoyed such popularity and longevity .

The Organon was first translated into French in 1824 by Baron von Brunnow, a writer and good friend of Hahnemann's. This translation was based on the second German edition.

It is not clear which is the first translation of the Organon in English. Generally it is assumed that is the translation from the fourth German edition by Charles Devriant, a lay person, which was published in 1833 in Dublin. Similar to France, homeopathy was introduced to Britain by a lay person named Samuel Stratten, who supported Devriant and wrote the foreword to his translation. At that time the Organon was the most widely distributed book in the world.

Dudgeon translated the fifth German edition which was published in 1849. A second edition of Dudgeon's translation was published in 1893. this edition is of particular interest as it contains a valuable appendix of the evolution of the Organon from the first to the fifth edition. Currently it is the only reference for the alterations Hahnemann made, as not all editions are available. Overall Dudgeon's translation is a fine scholarly piece of work, carried out with great accuracy.

Boericke translated the sixth edition, more precisely, he translated Hahnemann's additions and edited the paragraphs Hahnemann altered or omitted. The skeleton of the sixth edition is the fruit of Dudgeon's labour . Unfortunately Boericke was rather sloppy in accomplishing his task. He made many errors in the translation, omitted parts and made some of his own additions, thus not transmitting the pure message of Hahnemann's later observations.

Since the Boericke translation there have been several more recent translations of the Organon, with the main aim in making the understanding of it easier. In doing this much of the poetic artistic aspects, that enhance the beauty of the Organon have been lost. The only translation which enjoyed any popularity apart from the Boericke translation was the one carried out by Kuenzli et al. Unfortunately they did not include the valuable introduction written by Hahnemann, which is inexplicable.

In the nineties there has been a major up-swing in homeopathy which has led to re-evaluation of the available editions of the Organon both in German and English. Joseph Schmidt has published a new German edition in 1993. He spent nine months in California, comparing the original manuscript containing Hahnemann's annotations with the widely used Haehl edition. The Haehl edition contained many inconsistencies probably due to errors in transcribing the manuscript before it was shipped to the United States.

A recent publication by Wenda Brewster O'Reilly, which appeared in 1996, is the most up to date and scholarly translation of the Organon in English. Brewster O'Reilly edited the Organon and made her own annotations in the margin, enabling easy orientation. This publication is based on a new translation by Steven Decker. He has done a marvellous piece of work, retaining the artistic and musical qualities of Hahnemann's original.

### The Importance of the Organon for Clinical Practice

As stated above the Organon contains largely practical information. Hahnemann in all his publications put a greater emphasis on practice and less on theory. In logical sequence Hahnemann takes the reader through case taking, case management, remedy administration and handling of difficult cases amongst other topics.

In many respects Hahnemann was far ahead of his time or even timeless in his theoretical explanations of disease, ie he assumed infectious agents, inherited characteristics. In other areas Hahnemann's theories are out-dated and can no longer be seen as valid with the insights we have gained into the origin of disease, ie the cause of measles a being through an invisible non-material agent. We now know that measles is transmitted by a virus, we also know that not only the virus is the cause of the disease but the susceptibility of the host plays an equally important role. Thus Hahnemann was not entirely wrong in assuming a dynamic process in disease.

Studying and understanding the Organon will not only enhance but also improve homeopathic practice.



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