



## On Male And Female Balance In Homeopathy

By Nigel Summerley and Rowena Ronson

*One Issue Two Perceptions and A Step Outside The Box*

**NS** In the world of insects it is common for the female to be dominant. Bees, wasps and ants have societies and hierarchies that function on the basis of females being on top and males being subordinate. Why is it the opposite way round in homeopathy? And what can we learn from it?

In this age of supposed equality, there are still some jobs largely done by males (presidents and plumbers) and some largely done by females (supermodels and secretaries). The job of homeopath tends to fit the latter category. Sit in any homeopathic conference, seminar or classroom and the majority of those present are almost certain to be women.

Almost all of us struggle to make a living, so we have to have a second job, or a partner who will support us. Women who will support men financially are a rarity. We live in a culture where it is still, despite the rise of feminism, acceptable for women to rely on the support of men.

Many homeopaths are wives and mothers and part-time practitioners; for some, homeopathy is a cottage industry rather than a full-time profession. For some first-year students, many of whom drop out, homeopathy can be not so much an alternative to allopathy, as an alternative to doing a pottery class.

This 'part-timer' approach may be one of the reasons why the medical orthodoxy looks down from its frantically busy NHS anthills and sees us as 'amateurish'.

Women, of course, are also drawn to homeopathy not as a hobby or a bit of self-improvement, but because they readily resonate with its fundamental principles. The homeopathic approach to health and disease is deep and caring, more 'female' than 'male' - even though it was set in motion by a cantankerous and arrogant old man.

So why do most homeopathic 'gurus' tend to be men? Is it because women aren't bright enough? Surely not. Is it because they don't have the male hang-ups with ego and power and money? Possibly. Or is it because at the end of the day - literally - they are often the ones having to think about cooking supper and getting the kids to bed?

**RR** Many women become homeopaths because they have a personal experience of homeopathy, either through resolving their own health problems or those of their children. I had my own healing revelation with homeopathy when it literally saved my life and eventually this led me to go on and study it. I also saw it as an extension of what I was already doing in the fields of psychotherapy and teaching interpersonal skills.

As with my existing work, I felt I could fit in the role of a practitioner with being a parent of young children, since it would be possible to organise my working life within school hours. But after qualifying, I found that a successful homeopathic practice is not just about seeing patients; it also demands a greater degree than I realised, of marketing, motivation, raising awareness and contending with an establishment and media that are so often negative. With all that to do, it is no wonder that 'mother' homeopaths struggling to establish and sustain a successful practice can only see patients during limited hours.

Homeopathy has a reputation for not being a lucrative occupation. Is that a major reason why it is not so attractive to men? The profession's big names tend to be men. Is this because they have more freedom to devote their working lives to homeopathy if, in the main, they are not the ones at home looking after the family? Whether we like it or not, is there a divide between the roles of men and women even now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? And do women still want that?

In a profession dominated by women, the men stand out from the crowd and even the most average male homeopath seems to get more than their fair share of attention. Female students flutter around male teachers like bees to nectar. I was told recently how one male lecturer was welcomed to teach at a college, as he would provide, 'something for the women to look at'. Is this a case of positive discrimination and is that a good thing? And do we need sex involved to make our studies more exciting?

As a mother, I am less free to go and study internationally with the likes of Vithoulkas, Mangialavori and Sankaran or even closer to home with Jeremy Sherr. Of course, women without family responsibilities frequent these extended postgraduate courses, as do those fathers with partners who are full-time family carers.

## NS&RR

*Our discussions have led us to the following conclusions:*

Our profession is out of balance in terms of gender: we have a swarm of women and a dearth of men. There is no immediate prospect of this changing, but surely we could see more of a focus on the many talented and experienced women practitioner/teachers rather than on the predominant male 'gurus'.

Women are generally not attracted to homeopathy as some sort of hobby but are drawn to it because they have a genuine belief in its healing powers and from a desire to help others. Some, especially the mothers among us, practise it within the often tight constraints of busy and demanding lives.

We accept that there is a big dropout rate of female students, but even those women who finish their studies after the first year, return home equipped to be able to prescribe for friends and family needing first-aid or acute treatment.

It needs to be made clearer to men and women that studying homeopathy, whether during initial training or on postgraduate courses, is relatively expensive in comparison with our current earning power as homeopaths.

## Reviewed by Lawrence Bogle

Potency is a subject often mentioned but rarely written about in detail. It is an area that many newly qualified and even more experienced practitioners can find confusing. So it is rare to see a title dedicated solely to this subject. Michelle Shine's book is in two parts; in the first section illustrative cases are interjected with smaller pieces on subjects such as 'superficiality', 'potency and suppression', 'energy' and so on. In the second section she presents interviews on potency with some of the greats.

What I liked most on first reading *What About The Potency?* was the honesty of the author. It reads like a journal; we get to read about success and mistakes. How many books (or lecturers come to that) present cases and submit errors made along the way? In this format, it is heartening to read an up-front account of homeopathic life. Shine picks her way carefully through 19 cases, all of them fascinating. The reader becomes a voyeur, looking in on the author's experiences with her patients, remedies and potency. Also revealed are Shine's apparent twin phobias of aggravation and sensitivity, which she mentions frequently. This is good to read, as most homeopathic books appear to present a *conclusion* to their subject, intended to glide the uplifted reader through often-complex theories and methodologies, towards that eureka moment. Nothing wrong with that, but in reality (and I know this for sure) many books are slammed shut in frustration and left growling on our bookshelves. Shine's won't be; it is easy access all areas.

Part two is very interesting and well constructed, bringing together diverse practitioners, from Jeremy Sherr to Nancy Herrick, Roger Savage to the wonderful Alize Timmerman. In particular though, Francis Treuherz's account of saving his own life with *Pyrogen* stands out; his interview is both amusing and thought provoking. The author tried to get an interview with Rajan Sankaran, but sadly it didn't materialise, which is a pity, as she refers to him throughout the book. What I would have liked to see in this section is a brief biography of each individual, stating their years of experience, where they practise and who their teachers and homeopathic influences were. If we are to learn from them, I would be interested in the background.

The author states that she intends the book to be a 'work in progress' with the possibility of expansion at a later date, and indeed readers are invited to submit potency tips. Here I feel caution is called for. This book works because it is Shine's journey, and refreshing for that. It contains diverse opinion a-plenty and, as the author states, we all eventually find our own way. I feel this volume works neatly as it stands. On a less positive note, the visual presentation of the book has an amateur feel. We are a visually literate public, superficial enough to choose style over content.

This is a wonderful book of insights, observations and guidelines as to the gigantic question of potency, a subject that baffled me as a student, and to which it seemed every practitioner had their own, effortless solution. In the introduction to this book, Miranda Castro writes that she wishes she had been able to read it when starting out as a homeopath; I too wish I'd had this book then. I feel this publication will benefit our homeopathic community by exploring an issue rarely taught in depth.

## What About The Potency?

By Michelle Shine

Publ. Food for Thought Publications,  
UK, January 2005

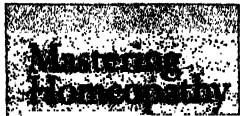
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Accurate Daily Prescribing  
For A Successful Practice

## Mastering Homeopathy: Accurate Daily Prescribing For A Successful Practice

By Jon Gamble

Karuna Publishing, Australia 2004

Pp.176 with index.

ISBN 0-9752473-0-1

Price £20

Email [karuna@bigpond.net.au](mailto:karuna@bigpond.net.au)

## Reviewed by Alastair Gray

It's an average Monday morning for me. I have, spread out on my desk, the array of cases still unsolved, left over from the previous week's practice days. It is carnage. I am pulling my hair out. There is a man with insomnia and IBS. There is a woman with absent libido after a termination. There is an 11-year-old with eczema on his wrists. What is characteristic about these cases is that I have prescribed at least six remedies to them over the past year. There have been some changes and movements. But they are all unresolved. It's hardly aphorism two: gentle, rapid and permanent. There comes a time to admit that the strategy you have adopted in a certain situation has to change. One of the things I have clarity about in these three cases is that I have been prescribing remedies on a still unclear profile of the totality of the patient and the symptoms. There is still a lack of definition in the case. It's like wearing someone else's glasses while looking at an archery target and trying to hit the bull's eye. My strategy today involves reaching for Jon Gamble's new book.

My first experience of Jon's clinical work was a case in 1998. I had successfully treated a woman for her asthma. She was moving back to the UK from Australia but her child came down with an ear infection. Qantas was refusing to allow the child to fly. I gave this and that over the next week. Nothing. In desperation I sent her to the Children's Ear Clinic and the mother later mailed me from London thanking me for the referral. The ear had resolved immediately with a therapeutic medicine prescribed by Jon on the basis of the pathology.

In *Mastering Homeopathy* Jon has provided a therapeutics book that addresses so many of the conditions presented at a busy homeopathic practice. There are chapters on children: ears, tonsils, headaches and others; women: candida, mastitis, cystitis and others; general conditions such as allergies, chronic fatigue and glandular fever, skin conditions, hyperthyroidism etc. The practical advice and the remedies suggested are beyond useful. I am thinking of the cases of pterygium, which came to my practice and went unresolved, of cases of warts, which came and went, that could have benefited from the suggestions made here. What is also presented, and before any suggestions for medicines, is information on the clinical presentations of each condition and a differential diagnosis.

But what excites me most about the book is the immediate thing it does better than other therapeutic texts. First is Jon's clarity in describing what we are doing when prescribing therapeutically. In some cases, we are

# Reviews

Review continued...

**Mastering Homeopathy:  
Accurate Daily Prescribing  
For A Successful Practice**  
By Jon Gamble

This review was first published  
in the Australian Journal  
*Similar* in 2004

looking to create change in the health, structural and functional change, through understanding the pathology of the symptom and prescribing accordingly. It is identifying those pathological changes, which may have come about due to the chronic disease, which will help us begin, and quite possibly complete the cure.

Also useful are the tables, which are laid out for quick reference. The section on posology is really valuable. It is especially valuable for a practitioner like myself who was not trained in any of the more therapeutic and pathological systems. The practical advice, nutritional and otherwise for acne, preventing ear infections and asthma are excellent. There are clear influences from the files and teachings of Parimal Banerji in India and Alan Jones, but this remains an original and creative work.

What about what's not there? In the men's health section we just have benign prostatic hypertrophy. I want more. What about the rest of the conditions that our gents turn up with in the clinic? It begs for a volume two.

I have loved reading and reviewing this book. It is a book that says what it is going to do and then delivers it. We know that therapeutic protocols are not successful every time. But what they do provide is another tool and a measure of flexibility in practice when one approach is failing you. Its value lies in representing a different strategy to employ. Its value is when there is not the opportunity, in a leisurely way, to delve into a larger totality of symptoms; or where the indicated remedy has failed you; where you are attempting to establish a ballpark of possibilities for your patient. Its value is often in needing to establish a result quickly.

I can think of 20 philosophical reasons why therapeutics books have their limitations. I can't think of one practical reason. And I know for sure my patients don't care. They want to get better. I can think of plenty of sinusitis cases or herpes cases that were resolved by remedies other than the therapeutic suggestions made here. Therapeutics alone is not enough to run a successful practice, but it is a hugely beneficial tool to have.

Mastering Homeopathy is not highbrow philosophy. Its therapeutic suggestions are not necessarily curing our patients aphorism nine style, 'for the highest purpose of our existence'. But it is practical, accurate, useable and user-friendly. It's on my desk now. The therapeutics texts of Lilienthal, Dewey, Morrison, Kansal and Clarke are in danger of being relegated back to the bookshelf.

## Reviewed by Francis Treuherz

This is a delightful book. Despite my misgivings, I have learned much from reading it and will heartily tell everyone to read it. I soon realised that I was reading cases and clinical results from a homeopathic genius and the sheer delight at her artistry took over, the errors (since corrected) receded into the background. Old remedies have sprung to life with new information for 27 acids. Don't let them drop.

Her main clinical theme is the variety of uses for acid remedies in paediatrics. She displays short vignettes of the children (and their parents) whom she has treated, finding some rare and interesting rubrics from her sensitive discernment of their behaviour and family dynamics. It has made me go over some old case files, and I look forward to a new approach next time I see some of my young patients. She also discusses the overall themes of acids as dependent on hydrogen and the theme of unification and unity which underlies the acids, as well as the weakness and torpor which is well known. Single remedy prescribers are rare in France, perhaps only ten percent of French homeopaths are *uniciste*, and many are now centred on the Hahnemannian school of Fréjus and Didier Grandgeorge, where she is also an active member.

She has relied heavily on three sources: Murphy's *Materia Medica* which of course is widely available, and in turn relies heavily and without shame on other well known sources, especially Clarke, Boericke and Julian. Le Roux quotes liberally from Murphy. Another reference is Scholten, who is a source of inspiration, themes, ideas and hypotheses rather than straight information. And lastly she uses van Zandvoort's *Complete Repertory* to identify strange rare peculiar and characteristic symptoms directly from the *ReferenceWorks* software (in which her book has also been included). So her cases are always backed up by more or less original evidence.

It is of course an expression of hubris to call any book *Complete* as did Roger van Zandvoort. His repertory was never complete and he never stopped correcting it and adding to it. This *complete study of acids* omits quite a few, for example: *Arsenious* (our *Arsenicum album* is an acid); *Desoxyribonucleinic*, (much has been written about DNA as a remedy, a good source is Vermeulen *Synopic 2*, which emphasises its use in paediatrics; she writes fully about RNA so this omission is puzzling); *Camphoric* (little known); *Malic* (not used in homeopathy but perhaps should be as a companion ingredient of wine with *Tannic* and *Tartaric*); *Pyrolignosic* (proved long ago but not used); *Succinic* (conflated with *Succinum* itself - Amber - by Clarke); *Sulphuricum acidum aromaticum* (little used); *Sulphurous*, (an atmospheric pollutant which I have used in symptoms like hay fever when the pollution count in London was high); *Tartaric* (as weak as all the others 'feels very tired, can scarcely drag himself along' writes Clarke) and *Telluric* (little known). *Carbonic acid* is not in our literature but perhaps should be.

I was taken aback at first by the small mistakes in punctuation and grammar, especially in the footnotes, and the infelicities of translation, where French words had been transliterated rather than translated. These have largely been corrected in a new edition. The amount of information and cases, the number of acids which are described, and the humane style all add up to a very readable and useful new book.

**Hydro-Homeopathy Energy**  
A complete study of the use of acids  
in homeopathy  
By Patricia Le Roux  
Translated from French by Juliet  
Young  
Publ. Publibook, France, 2004  
Pp. 277 Paperback  
ISBN 2748305655  
Price 27.50 euros from  
www.amazon.fr.



## Reviewed by Francis Treuherz

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it Duck Soup? It is not even chicken soup. No, in this instance it is a 500-page book in a larger than usual, almost square, octavo format. The information is also considerable, and this book's impact will be enormous, but perhaps slow to travel. I have found this a difficult book to review as it is so rich, and I have not yet been able to prescribe a bird remedy. But the ideas and concepts and material will be extremely valuable to the world of homeopathy as they gradually come into use.

The end papers have 16 little icons of birds with their English name and the Latin repertorial abbreviation as a code to the book. There is an overview of the concepts and themes of the avian kingdom. Proving information and cases from various practitioners fill out the pictures of each bird. Birds covered are: Pelican, Macaw, Dove, Hawk, Owl, Heron, Eagle, Raven, Peregrine and Sacher Falcons, Vulture, Condor, Penguin, Mute and Whooper Swans, and Albatross. Other birds will be covered in a future volume.

I found that I could not keep the icons in my mind as a guide to which bird was which. Also after the general sections there are three sections devoted to *Key Features*, *Proving* and *Cases*. Instead of each bird in its entirety, each one is separately described in each section so one cannot read each bird without losing the thread and turning pages. There are 15 key features, 16 provings, and only 14 cases, one of which, *Tuberculinum Aviare*, does not feature in the first two sections (I hope the numerical discrepancy is not too important). And since the tubercular nosode is listed, it is strange that the *Oscillocochinum*, or the nosode made from the liver and heart of the Barbary duck, is omitted, as it received a classical proving by Roy in France in 1925.

This is nonetheless a carefully constructed book, hugely expanding our materia medica, and with the cases, bringing in clinical evidence of the practical utility of these remedies. Shore and his co-authors fully acknowledge the contributions of colleagues such as Jeremy and Camilla Sherr, who have generously allowed the use their material. There are full details of provings and there is something really new to most people: it has been adopted as part of many new provings, such as by Schadde, but I am not convinced of its legitimacy: namely the effect of the trituration process as a proving on the individual and on the group. Hering noted this in the strange feelings he experienced when triturating the saliva of a rabid dog in 1833. Here in California, those triturating bird remedies for Shore began to experience what have been called proving symptoms, it is not clear to me whether they were individual symptoms, or part of a group dynamic of those making the remedies.

I have heard Jonathan Shore teach; it was a total cultural experience. He lectured to an international audience in Berlin on the significance of Radium to society, to atomic physics, and of course to homeopathy. It was magnificent. Then some years later I heard him on birds for the first time at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital. I can hear his voice in the prose of this book. Reading it is more than a total homeopathic experience; he will teach us to fly, he will teach us perfectionism, freedom, travel, movement; his empathy shines out.

## Birds: Homeopathic Remedies from the Avian Realm

By Jonathan Shore, Judy Schriebman & Anneke Hogeland

Publ. Homeopathy West, Berkeley CA, USA, 2004

Pp. 505. Paperback

ISBN: 0975476300

Price £37

[www.homeopathywest.com](http://www.homeopathywest.com)

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