

# Margaret Roy

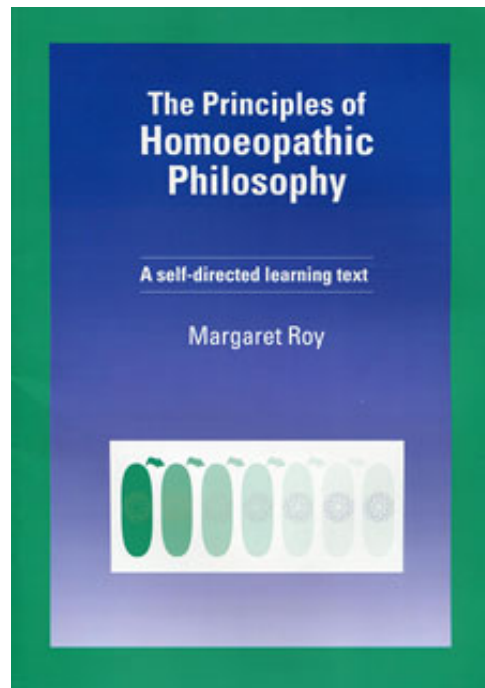
## The Principles of Homoeopathic Philosophy

Leseprobe

[The Principles of Homoeopathic Philosophy](#)

von [Margaret Roy](#)

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## LESSON FOUR

# The Symptoms

*'There is nothing morbid ... that is curable which does not make itself known by means of marked signs and symptoms*

*The Organon, para 14*

**Headings:** Definition of a Symptom Types of Symptom Hierarchy of Symptoms How to Construct a Hierarchy A Complete Symptom Grades of Symptom in the Repertory

**Aims:** To understand the role of symptoms.

**Objectives:** By the end of this lesson you should be able to: recognize the type of symptom; recognize if a symptom is complete; construct a hierarchy of symptoms; recognize a grade of symptom in a repertory.

## Definition of a Symptom

A **symptom** is a change in the body/mind which causes discomfort and shows an altered state of health in which the functioning of the body/mind becomes less efficient.

A **symptom shows** disharmony, or dis-ease, of the whole.

A **symptom is produced** by the vital force in the process of cure. Like the waves in a pond, the symptoms are used to dissipate the energy of the disturbance. Although the symptoms may appear higgledy-piggledy, there is a reason for each. Like running water, the vital force chooses channels of least resistance. First it will use the organs of excretion, but if these are blocked or insufficient it will find other routes. It will adapt other organs or systems such as the lungs or menstruation, then it will use weak organs.

**There is system and pattern in the production of symptoms.** To make sense of this system and pattern, let us first label some different types of symptom.

## Types of Symptom

Symptoms can be classified in four different ways:

1. **Presenting**
  - Prescribing** These label information given by the patient.
  - Concomitant**
2. **Subjective** This perspective becomes important because scientific procedure is usually seen as objective. Yet the patient's experience is also valuable, and this is subjective.
  - Objective**
3. **Characteristic** In homoeopathic terms this describes the special pattern of a patient or remedy.
4. **Strange, Rare and Peculiar**
  - Mental and Emotional** These categories are used by the homoeopath to describe degrees of individuality and levels of activity of the vital force.
  - General**
  - Particular**
  - Common**

## Presenting Symptoms

*are those of which the patient complains, and so we are aware of these first.*

Mr Jones came into the clinic because he had a badly swollen elbow. This is his presenting symptom. Sometimes the homoeopath does not give much emphasis to the presenting symptom because it is only an external manifestation of the inner economy. However, it is important to Mr Jones, so the homoeopath must account for each presenting symptom and must find its position in the total symptom picture. A well-chosen remedy will deal with the presenting symptoms when it improves health and raises the vitality of the vital force.

*Examples:*

- You go to the dentist with toothache (presenting symptom), but it may be that the cause is an abscess.
- Pain in the ear (presenting symptom) may arise from inflammation of the mastoid area.
- Tightness in the chest area (presenting symptom) may focus the grief and distress a patient experiences after her mother dies.
- Duodenal ulcer (presenting symptom) may be caused by hurried eating to return to work, because the patient is insecure and anxious about his ability to complete | the work satisfactorily.

## Prescribing Symptoms

*characterize the individuality and susceptibility of the patient.*

These are the most important symptoms because they enable us to identify the remedy. Remember, each remedy is unique in the way it affects patients, and we choose the remedy that matches the symptom picture produced by the patient. Kent describes prescribing symptoms as something that stops us in our tracks, making us hesitate because it is unusual, or out of the ordinary. It will not amaze us that a patient has a red face with a high fever, but our curiosity is stimulated if she has a red face only when she tries to lie down. Such a symptom is valuable to the homoeopath because it is individual. Few remedies have this unusual variation, so it is easier to single out a remedy. All prescribing symptoms are out of the ordinary and unexpected.

*Examples:*

- Sweating occurs only on the head, or only on uncovered parts.
- The cold feet are blue and sweaty.
- The pain of the piles continues for at least 2 hours after the stool is passed.
- Despite the heat of the fever the patient refuses to drink.
- Sweat is absent in the child's high temperature.

## Concomitant Symptoms

*accompany and are associated with other symptoms.*

Sweating is commonly associated with fever, but when it occurs with diarrhoea or pain it is a concomitant symptom. In a remedy such as Antimonium Crudum, gastric problems are associated with skin eruptions.

*Examples:*

- Headache accompanied by nausea.
- Swelling accompanied by stinging pains.
- Copious urination accompanied by cold feet.
- Numbness of the fingers and toes, accompanied by copious urination.

## ACTIVITY 1



Give at least five examples of prescribing, presenting and concomitant symptoms. Go back and check your examples with those in the text.

## Objective Symptoms

*are observable by someone other than the patient.*

The whole range of tests, diagnostic procedures and instrumentation in modern medicine have been created to discover objective symptoms. The doctor uses these symptoms to build up a pattern to which disease labels are applied - these then become

common symptoms, of course. In the absence of objective signs, the doctor is unwilling to apply a label, and so cannot easily tell the patient what is wrong.

## Subjective Symptoms

*are felt only by the patient.*

Subjective symptoms are therefore not verifiable scientifically. If you feel hot, tired or thirsty, who can tell if you are right? Can I tell you how thirsty you are? Or how cold you are? Or how hungry you are? There are no instruments to measure these factors.

Of course, we are reliant on the patient telling the truth about subjective symptoms, and we are reliant on his or her ability to describe such symptoms accurately; this is another matter we will deal with under case-taking procedures.

One valuable aspect of the subjective symptom to preventive medicine lies in the ability of the patient *to feel* ill long before overt pathology develops. On the subjective level the patient's vital force may be less disturbed, and thus more easily cured.

The homoeopath is equally at home with both sets of symptoms, and indeed usually puts greater emphasis on the subjective symptoms because many of these represent the mind of the patient, which is the most evolved and individual part. These symptoms are not unscientific to the homoeopath, because they are present in the provings of the remedies, so it is a simple matter to include them in the symptom picture without worrying about their lack of objectivity. Some of the provings were done almost 200 years ago, and you can read the documentation or do a proving of your own and still come up with the same symptoms!

### ACTIVITY 2



From your own experience, give five examples each of objective and subjective symptoms.

## Characteristic Symptoms

*may apply to the patient or the remedy; usually we think of them as forming a remedy's distinctive symptom picture.*

When ill, each patient produces symptoms which are repetitions of previous illnesses, so illness is not self-contained and omnipotent but is manifest by the individual according to his or her own pattern of weakness (predisposition). For example, Mrs Auld may have nausea and/or dizziness precede any illness, whether it be a cold, food poisoning, typhoid, etc., and this characteristic weakness may make her prone to motion sickness and may be prevalent when she has less sleep than normal. Another example may involve 20 patients who all need the remedy *Nux vomica*, even though they have different illnesses: one may be arthritic, another have croup, another heartburn, one have high blood pressure, yet all are characterized as impulsive, easily angered people who all suffer from pressing pain on the vertex of the head after eating rich foods. The last group of symptoms is characteristic of the remedy *Nux vomica*, and there is no physiology connecting them in the illnesses mentioned. Occurring as a pattern they form the *Materia Medica*, the symptom picture characteristic of a remedy.

### ACTIVITY 3



Give at least ten examples of characteristic symptoms from the remedies you have studied.

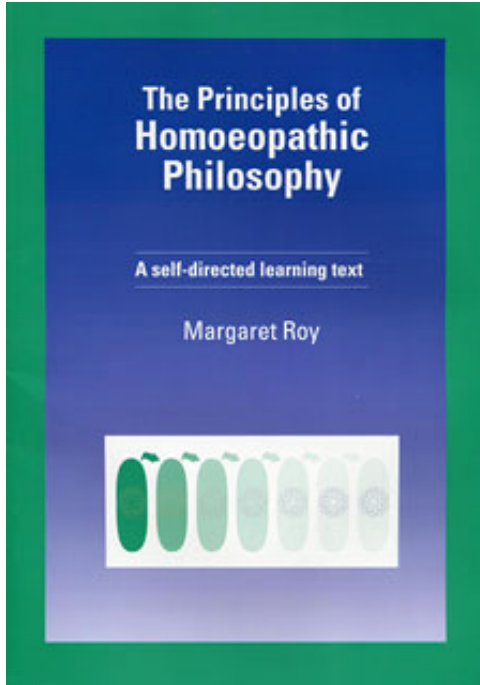
Nash's *Materia Medica* deals almost entirely with characteristic symptoms, whereas von Lippe and Allen put them in heavy black type.

Do not forget to name the remedy.

The fourth classification will be dealt with under the hierarchy of symptoms.

## Hierarchy of Symptoms

The hierarchy of symptoms is most fully developed by Kent. The basic premise is that some symptoms are more important than others. Some symptoms are more expressive of individuality and uniqueness, and therefore enable a more precise match to the symptom picture of a remedy. Some symptoms indicate a deeper disturbance of the vital force.



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