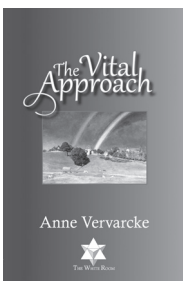




Book Reviews



The Vital Approach

Author: Anne Vervarcke

Details: Paperback. 130pp. **Price:** approx \$30.
Publisher: The White Room, Leuven Belgium, 2010. www.thewhiteroom.be
ISBN: 978-90-810-0170-0
Reviewer: Joanne Greenland

When I was asked to write a report on Anne Vervarcke's new book, *The Vital Approach*, I must confess that I was not familiar with either the author or the book, and when my copy arrived in the mail I was eager to see what angle this book of 130 pages would take on homœopathic philosophy.

The Vital Approach is an articulate text describing Vervarcke's method of homœopathy, a method heavily influenced by Rajan Sankaran's Vital Sensation methodology. Dr. Sankaran and his team are now bringing out many books studying kingdoms and subkingdoms of materia medica, looking deeply into the strange, rare and peculiar aspect of each group. The contrast between these books and where *The Vital Approach* finds its value is that this text is not so much an exploration of particular material medica, but more of an exposition of homœopathic methodology.

With 20 years of experience behind her, Vervarcke has developed her own understanding of homœopathy and shares her knowledge simply and coherently with the reader. The pure simplicity and clarity with which Vervarcke explains her understanding is the reason I love this book; her concise message rings clear and true and the reader gains not only an understanding of the theory behind Vervarcke's methodology but also an understanding of how to apply it in their own practice.

Vervarcke explains how the vital sensation, the part of the patient we are trying to ascertain, "is the way the person experiences himself, it is how he is, what it is like to be him, hence his individual being or his uniqueness." She makes the interesting analogy that the patient is like "a whole orchestra with the vital disturbance being one instrument that is out of tune, spoiling the entire performance," giving clarity on how homœopathy cures.

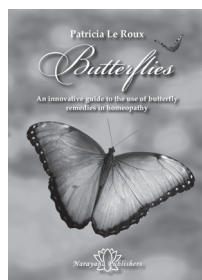
The kingdoms are clearly differentiated. The patients requiring mineral remedies express their disturbance as emptiness, a lack, as

missing or losing something that they need in order to exist. The patients requiring remedies from the animal kingdom express their disturbance as a survival issue, whether they will kill or be killed. The patients needing plant remedies describe what the sensation feels, such as scalding, raw or painful. The patients requiring a remedy from the monera kingdom are focused on adaption. I particularly like how Vervarcke compares the same example through each of the kingdoms, giving clarity to this point.

Vervarcke acknowledges that Hahnemann's approach to the miasms is fundamentally different to that of Sankaran's. She justifies this by suggesting that the Hahnemannian miasms are more applicable to the physical level, whilst Dr. Sankaran's are more related to the mental level.

It is wonderful how simply Vervarcke discusses the importance of contemporary homœopathy. She enforces that it is never good policy to give a remedy just because the homœopath knows it better or because it is traditional instead of the remedy that the patient really needs. She declares, "To be less accurate in prescribing out of conservatism is a pity for the patient, to say the least. In other branches of therapy outdated procedures are no longer held onto when newer and better insight is gained."

And whilst the theme of Vervarcke's *The Vital Approach* is about how to spot the vital disturbance on the levels of experience, it is refreshing that she does not try to force her message or make it a lesson; the text is simply a dissertation of the way she 'does' homœopathy. Vervarcke's descriptions of the way she succeeds in her own practice make *The Vital Approach* ring true and would certainly encourage a novice in this method to give it a go. For those already experienced in this method of homœopathy I also recommend that you read this book; somehow, it seems to help bring all we already know together.



Butterflies: An innovative guide to the use of butterfly remedies in homeopathy

Author:
Patricia Le Roux

Details: Hardback. 130pp. **Price:** AU\$28.00+/-
Publisher: Narayana Publishers, Kandern, Germany, 2009
ISBN: 9783939931782
Reviewer: Val Probert

Butterflies was written by Patricia Le Roux in 2009. The book, which discusses eight butterflies and five moths, is divided into four main sections followed by a conclusion and summary chapter. In the first chapter the characteristics of the butterfly world are introduced and the reader is given a clear guide to the classification and symbolism of the butterfly.

In the second chapter on provings, I noted several errors and incorrect information, which disappointed me. The statement Le Roux makes about the original Hahnemannian provings being available to us thanks to Frans Vermeulen, really made me wonder if she had ever been introduced to Hahnemann's *Materia Medica Pura* or *Chronic Diseases*, which have always been the main source of Hahnemann's provings. In describing the different proving methods, Le Roux assures the reader that "all of them have been organised in double blind". Her definition of double blind, "half the provers take the remedy and the other half take placebo, only the supervisor knows who has taken what" left me wondering. Surely, in a double blind situation, the supervisor would also be unaware of both the substance being proved and which provers had verum or placebo.

The third chapter provides the reader with a brief summary of the symptoms common to all butterflies. These are expanded in the Case Studies and Materia Medica chapter with each of the case studies including themes, which relate to the key symptoms. I really enjoyed reading this section and found some of the themes very clear. A child who regularly dresses up as a pirate gives us the theme of Pirates, although I am not sure why this is not included in the theme of Metamorphosis, which is one of the common symptoms of all butterflies. The theme of Self Castration, introduced by a three-year old boy with a twisted (?) testicle, which ended in necrosis, left me feeling that this theme was a bit far-fetched and wondering how it had actually come about.

It would have been much easier to have the information on the proving included with the materia medica section. I found myself constantly flicking back to the proving section to see how the themes related to the proving symptoms.

I found myself nodding in agreement with Le Roux "that none of the provings that appear in this book fulfil the criteria of a perfect proving" and again later when she mentions that the information in the book "is only minimal and calls for verification". I definitely would like to have seen more information on the provings, especially where the original information could be sourced because this would be of assistance in future verification.