

**Bernd Schuster / COLA – Homeopathic proving of the Cola Nidita  
MUCH MORE THEN JUST A “PROVING BOOK”**

**Alternative subtitle: a fine example of how to go about carrying on a proving, without shortcuts.**

One more publication by Bernd Schuster, Master prover of Bamboo and author of “Bamboo – Homeopathic Proving of Bambusa Arundinacea”. This time of the Cola-Nut (Cola - “one of the omnipresent words” says Schuster)

After going through a number of “Proving books” (or proving reports as many unfortunately do not materials into actual books although well deserved to be) and after attending seminars were homeopaths who “did a proving” are presenting their findings (hopefully accompanied by a case or two) I did not honestly expect a “fascinating reading material”. So, as I found myself reading page after page, in sequence (I rarely do that even with good novels) I made a note to myself: this is much more than just a “proving book”.

Of course there is information about the substance that the remedy was made of and as in his previous fine publication, Schuster does not leave a stone unturned in his search for information about the substance of which he is about to prove. Origins and history, chemistry and pharmacology, present homeopathic knowledge and survey of scientific investigations of cola are all meticulously gathered, recorded and clearly laid out. There is some repetition but just enough to help get the main themes through.

The reports of the participants are always the most tedious part to read – it goes on forever and one is soon losing track of what is going on. And no wonder. Following symptoms of a single case could sometimes be a great task. Following symptoms gathered from 25 (!) provers is much like trying to look into 25 cases simultaneously. Here too, half of the book is comprised of the reports of the provers themselves (provers own words). Luckily it is edited according to themes so that after reading the whole list, a quick glimpse at the titles is enough to refresh one's memory as to what's going on. Despite the multitude of information, the main ideas are clear. To further tighten the ideas there are, later on in the book, synthesis, interpretation and signature,.

Concerned about the fact that too many recent provings coincide in their statements and themes, Schuster has chosen to start the proving process with a 14 days “empty phase”: let the provers (who are confident that they are under an influence of the remedy but who are actually taking placebo) write their reports, looking into their innermost depths. Later, we could eliminate that information from the symptom picture that is being revealed during the “remedy phase”. But as Schuster himself comments: “This argument assumes that it is possible to have a genuinely effect-free ‘empty remedy’ in the proving. As I realized later, this is a very problematic point”

Following that, there is a fascinating discussion into the issue of placebo or as Schuster names it “empty remedies” (versus “dynamized remedy”). This is a brave attempt to explain the ever puzzling reports of provers from the placebo

group who are coming up with symptoms much along the line of the provers who were actually taking the dynamized remedy.

Here is something to think about: If we take one globule of say Sil 30C and place it in a bottle of “non dynamized globules”. Are they still “empty”: now? If we take few bottles full of Sil LM6 and pack it together with a bottle of alcohol (empty remedy) or store it on the shelf one next to each other, how long will this “empty remedy” be considered “empty”?

As in his Bamboo proving Schuster uses Q potencies - this time exclusively. A first sizeable remedy proving of a new medicine to be done exclusively with a Q potency. There is a lengthy appendix detailing the reasoning behind it and the methodology.

It is these chapters and others who makes this book so much more than just a proving book. Schuster is sharing considerations and dilemmas he had during the planing of the proving and analyzing the results. These mostly concerned with philosophical issues but baring direct implication on the practical and methodological aspects.

There is an eye opening comparisons of Cola and other “tree remedies” and of Cola and the drug remedies.

One of the arguments used by those in the homeopathic community who are less enthusiastic about new provings is about the validity of symptoms before actually proven in their clinical use. Towards the end of the book there are few Cola cases analyzed in length accompanied by quotations from the proving. Not entirely *invincible* (if to use one of the Cola themes) but rather convincing.

For those who are eager to get a sharp and quick glimps at the main themes of the Cola – Nut here it is in a nut shell: **Insatiability and exaggeration**. This shows connection with the effect of: eating disorders, mania and hyperactivity, disturbances of sugar metabolism, gastrointestinal illnesses with diarrhea, problems with self confidence, depression, weakness, sleepiness, history of drug-taking with heroin, LSD, and cocain and a history of alcohol abuse. Enough to make you want to study this remedy really well.

It takes an exceptionally dedicated homeopath to carry on the painstaking task of proving the way Schuster (and few more- too few homeopaths – like Sherr, Schade) is doing. It takes enourmouse amount of time, dedication and resources to publish it. Proving books, as you all know, are not best sellers. Where would homeopathy be today without the great muster provers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century? . Where would our profession be tommorrow without homeopaths such as Schuster? To further take our proffession forward takes two: one, contemporary homeopaths that will undertake to carry good quality Hahnemannian provings and then share their knowledge via such fine publication and two, homeopaths to buy and study those new provings so that they can use it in their cases, expand the clinical experience of each new remedy and further share that knowledge.

Compliments to the Homeopathie Forum for supporting the publication. May this be an example to other organisations to follow suit.

This fine book can be obtained from: [Bschester@compuserve.com](mailto:Bschester@compuserve.com)

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