Louis Klein

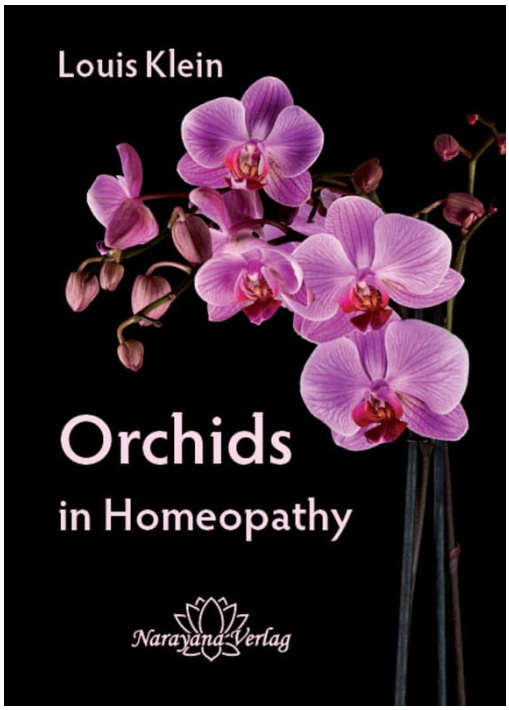
Orchids in Homeopathy

Leseprobe

Orchids in Homeopathy

von Louis Klein

Herausgeber: Narayana Verlag



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As a general quality, Orchid remedies are also important for patients who are in situations and relationships that involve sexual or physical abuse and violence. And in a more moderate society, this leads to many Orchid patients being in jobs that exist in the midst of conflict or even violent confrontation and threats, including lawyers or law clerks, social workers or counselors. Their approach is friendlier and more enthusiastic than is the norm, offering calm, cheer, and solace, yet at the same time they remain somewhat detached from the situation.

In a comparable manner, this theme may appear as the Orchid patient being the partner of someone with a shadowy and difficult, even abusive personality. The Orchid patient compensates, putting on a brave or cheerful face but, like *Lac delphinum*, can also attempt to hide the problems or abuse of the other person.

A further way it may manifest is someone who marries into a family, where the previous spouse of their new partner has just died and they are the outsider who, through their elegant and joyful demeanor, helps heal the family's grief.

Another way of expressing the preceding theme is "adaptability within conflict." Many stories about orchids, and especially narratives about the search for these exotic plants, involve this theme. Orchids are widespread throughout the world, primarily in warmer climates, but species do exist even in very cold climates. The Orchid patient is adaptable and makes any conflict around them much more livable. Such adaptation can also be an internal process. The patient needing an Orchid remedy can adapt to serious limitations and challenges in their health – including such challenges as multiple sclerosis, neurological problems, paralysis, and weakness. They may keep a joyful countenance in the face of any great physical or emotional challenge. And as mentioned in the beginning of this section, they may disengage and focus on more superficial, self-gratifying elements in their reality.

Since they grow on dead matter, the issue of death and dying is important in Fungal remedies. Dreams of death and the impression of death are also prominent in many of the Orchid provings and clinical cases. I have also seen this theme manifested in a number of Orchid cases where a patient cannot conceive and has multiple miscarriages. These are also remedies for individuals who may have suffered the death of parents or other caregiver at a young age.

As well as heightened awareness, anxiety, or fear of death, it may also be contemplated calmly or joyfully. In the proving of *Trichoceros antennifer* there was the idea of taking

care of someone who wishes to die and is suicidal. In *Vanilla*, there is a feeling of death and evil surrounding the individual and a need for protection from it. So you could say that many Orchids are "in the midst of death, dying and suffering," whether this involves a close friend or relative, or a wider societal situation where there is much violence and death.

The parasitic and dependent qualities of Fungi are also shared by Orchids. In many of the Orchid remedies there are themes of helplessness yet cooperation. Related issues of how Orchids give and demand care and support are discussed further below.

Heightened Senses and Extreme Sensitivity

In the Orchid provings, the senses were accentuated. There can be hypersensitivity in one type of sense or in various senses. Particularly profound was the sense of sight, with light playing an important role. Touch was also heightened and refined.

We can also see the seemingly opposite situation – where the senses are overwhelmed, and therefore blocked, and expression is stultified, even apparently impossible (as is seen in many neurobehavioral disorders and autism). You could say that the problem is more to do with expression than with the actual experience of the senses. In other words, the sensual experience may be increased but with little ability for outward release.

This sensitivity is also why we may see such a strong interest in their material environment. In the case of autistic or Asperger's children it may be that they have an attachment to, or an aversion to the way certain things feel, smell, or look. They may desire to feel or even smell objects around them repetitively. Orchid patients may also be artistically sensitive with an acute awareness of the environment around them and a desire to work with it or depict it in an elevated, aesthetic way.

In other instances, there may be a great environmental sensitivity to smells and chemicals. They may have strong allergies to chemicals, smells, perfumes, dust, or other substances. This is a theme of patients needing remedies from the whole plant order of the Asparagales, of which the family Orchidaceae is a part. I have also seen homeopathic Orchids being useful for patients with sensitivity to electromagnetic emanations.

Such sensitivity can also be on an emotional level. Injustice can easily anger them and they are particularly reactive to others invading their space or what they are attached to. This can even extend to their country's space and identity. Specific orchids

have anger about specific issues, which are usually related to some particular internal sensitivity or weakness for which they need to compensate. They can be acutely aware of criticism, betrayal, and rejection, and those who are gossiping about them. They often need "space" to deal with their emotional wounds in the attempt to transform these wounds or the emotional wounds of others. They are sensitive to, and may become paralyzed by baser emotions, resulting in feeling shame. To avoid this, they may partake in these baser expressions or become deceptive themselves.

In some of the provings and patients I have seen, there is clairvoyance and clairaudience showing how strong the exquisite sensitivity can get. They can pick up, and be quite sensitive to the psychic forces around them.

The Outsider and Issues of Support

Although some Orchid patients may be quite gregarious, the opposite polarity of extreme and exquisite sensitivity towards the physical or emotional environment can lead to them cutting off from their surroundings. They can become isolated and disconnected as outsiders and eventually there can be a complete compensatory disengagement as we see in Asperger's syndromes and autism. Patients with deep pathology of this type need a lot of care and attention. In less extreme cases, there is less severe but still debilitating ADD, ADHD, and other types of neurobehavioral disorders that affect communication, with a tendency to withdraw. They may feel alone, like a castaway, and experience either resentment or resignation as a result. They can have difficulty connecting to purpose or meaning in life or work, preferring to freeload and make demands on others. In some cases, as indicated in the description of *Phalaenopsis gigantea*, withdrawal is combined with resentful frustration at communication difficulties. They may derive strength from other people and need social assistance (especially noted in the epiphytic and lithophytic Orchid types), sometimes to the extent that a whole family is on chronic welfare.

Even though they may be lovingly embraced by a group of people or a new family or relationship, they may have underlying feelings that they will be rejected or that they are the outsider in the group.

On the other hand, they may be in a situation where they care for a relative who requires continuous, substantial financial and emotional support. The needy individual may be someone who is physically, mentally, or emotionally challenged, including someone who is treated as an outcast. This could be a child with autism or Down syndrome or a sibling or parent who is drug addicted or has some sort of disabling

Phalaenopsis gigantea



Names and Meanings

Abbreviation: *Phala-g.*
Common Names: Elephant Ear Orchid, Gigantic Phalaenopsis, Giant-leaved Moth Orchid
Scientific Name: *Phalaenopsis gigantea* J. J. Sm.
Synonym: *Polychilos gigantea*
Meanings: Phalaenopsis – from Greek *phalaina*, a moth + *-opsis*, like. From the supposed resemblance of some types to moths in flight. There is also a genus of large moths named *Phalaena* by Carl Linnaeus.
Gigantea – from Latin, referring to the leaf size.

Classification

Type: Epiphytic
Subfamily: (Higher) Epidendroideae
Tribe, Subtribe: Vandeae, Aeridinae

Description and Source

The most widely-grown orchids in the world are from the genus *Phalaenopsis*, including hybrids. This particular species is native to forests up to 400m in parts of Indonesia and Malaysia including Borneo, Sabah, and Sarawak, and was first described in 1909. As an epiphyte it can be found growing in the tops of trees with the massive roots wrapped around branches for support. In Malesia, the humidity is high and rainfall plentiful, although there is a drier season (usually towards the middle part of the winter). The plant requires an intact root system to maintain leaf hydration, and responds poorly to root disturbance. Named for its gigantic leaves – the leaf span can easily exceed 2 feet (60 cm) – it is the largest of the *Phalaenopsis* species. The 5 to 6 massive leaves are pendent, leathery, broadly rounded, pale silver-green and shiny on both surfaces, bearing some resemblance to elephant

ears. Generally, the plants grow with steeply-tilted leaves so as to shed water, in order to prevent crown rot.

The orchid flowers the most in the summer, although the plant can bloom from four to six months at a time. A typical *Phalaenopsis gigantea* flower has a natural spread of about 2" (5 cm). The flowers tend to have a cream or yellow background with varying degrees of green around the column. They have full, round, waxy petals that are roughly equal in size, usually overlap and have raised red-brown spots or blotches that you can feel with your fingers. After a relatively long maturing period of 8 to 12 years, as short as 4 years in optimum conditions, plants are capable of producing hundreds of flowers on branching stalks that reach 16" (40 cm) in length, rising from a very short monopodial stem. Blooms within a single growth season open simultaneously and have a sweet, citrus scent. [Pfahl, Wikipedia]
See the Full Hahnemannian Proving in Section 4.

Homeopathy Commentary

The distinguishing feature of this Orchid is the problem with concentration, memory, and the ability to communicate clearly and express oneself. There is a high expectation about their abilities, thoughts, and ideas, but a difficulty in expressing them. There is stammering, slurring of words, and a strong sense of general confusion when attempting either to concentrate or to speak.

This Elephant Ear Orchid was proved in a full Hahnemannian way with Sally Williams as the master prover. Ever since then, and for a number of years now, colleagues and I have been successfully prescribing it. One cured case was that of an overweight child on the autism spectrum who was obsessed with elephants. In one of her many cases of this remedy, Sally gave the remedy with excellent results to an adult whose inability to learn, and most importantly to communicate, led him to become depressed and to withdraw, frustrated, from family and friends.

With these central aspects of confusion and poor communication, *Phalaenopsis gigantea* has already been confirmed as an important remedy for ADD, ADHD, and neurodevelopmental disorders. In the broadest terms, there are difficulties with concentrating and with learning, problems in retaining information, writing, and speaking. Frequent expressions used by provers (and now patients) include: “I’m very, very confused,” “My confusion continues,” “I have a lack of concentration; I have a lack of focus.”

With respect to this issue one prover remarks: "I was not able to listen and remember – almost like I cannot hear… My concentration is lacking; I have a dopey feeling all the time." Another prover records: "Letters on the computer screen made no sense at all; I had to read [them] over and over."

A patient given *Phalaenopsis* with success described this state as a feeling of being underwater. Also, there is a sensation that the mind is racing but that "my brain is sleepy." The patient can feel sleepy much of the time, especially when concentrating or in school.

These will be patients who have great difficulty in reading and will avoid reading books, instead watching television, videos, or movies.

Most of the participants of the proving were enrolled in a homeopathic college. During the proving they temporarily had trouble absorbing and retaining information, as if they had learning disabilities. They suffered from weak memory, a fogginess of mind, and a dullness of the senses overall. During the proving, taking tests was overwhelmingly challenging. As well, in all areas of writing there were misspellings and mistakes along with confounding letters. One prover said, "I'm confused on what I should write," and another said, "I could not think straight to articulate proper words."

Conversely, in a confirmation of this theme, one prover with a history of ADD did very well during the proving (a curative response!) and many of his concentration difficulties were resolved.

The frustration over the inability to communicate creates social embarrassment. There is a feeling of being trapped by what they perceive as an overpowering disability – a disability that must be hidden; this is experienced as both a desire and an inability to escape. The natural tendency of the patient who needs this Orchid remedy is to blend into their environment and to be secretive. (It is one of the only Orchid provings so far that have brought out a concept of "secretive" and used the word "secret.") Even while they attempt to keep the extent of their problem secret, precisely because of their memory and expression issues they are forced out of "hiding."

This trapped feeling, and comparable scenarios, came out in many dreams of the provers. The primary source of these feelings, as is now clear from clinical experience, is a sense for the *Phalaenopsis gigantea* individual that they are misunderstood. In this remedy picture my colleagues and I have found irritability over misunderstandings

and a consequent tendency to provoke arguments with co-workers, with friends and spouse. Whilst stuck in an attention-deficit state, patients experience (as did the provers) anger and resentment towards those around them. They can accuse family members of causing their problems, or of not helping them properly as a child. They can feel that others are laughing at them, gossiping and talking about them, and this aggravates them further. Moreover, with their victimized attitude they then go on to incite this same feeling in others.

In addition, such an outlook inflames the feeling of being abused and wrongly accused. Eventually, as the inability to communicate increases so does the frustration, culminating inevitably in an attempt to escape the situation – mainly through withdrawal. Ultimately, since their self-esteem is based disproportionately on what others think of them, they come to feel lost, with no direction, and with a feeling as if they do not belong.

The proving also engendered dreams exemplifying a major theme within the Orchid group – that of sexuality and sensuality as a means of disarming a situation. In this specific Orchid what emerges as notable and thus particularizing is an associated strong need to escape:

> 04, 31: I dreamt I am on the street at night in New York City. A guy comes along, he was suggestive and threatening. I can show him by being funny and flirty, and go across the street to a gallery. A safer looking man is there, he hires me to be a model. I don't know what this means but I am willing to go along, it turns out to be fun. Still, it is all just a means of me finding a way to get out of this. I escaped to an elevator. I watch as it carries us (others – strangers in the elevator) up and up. When I see the number 47th floor, I think no, that's going up too high and I want to go down. The elevator opens and oddly, here I am out on the street level again, safe. I feel I was rescued using my own resourcefulness.

In the dream, with respect to the elevator ascending in an "out of control" fashion, there are two escape options: escape through a narrow place, such as a tunnel or via an elevator, or escape through sexuality. In other words, the prover has the feeling that only through sexuality or through their own resourcefulness can they escape danger and conflict.

In the case of *Phalaenopsis gigantea*, for the most part, the patient feels hopelessly stuck and trapped with no way of escape except through a very narrow challenging place.

This resonates strongly with the feeling of the Malaria miasm (see Malaria Compound in *Miasms and Nosodes,* Volume 1). Confirming this, other aspects are shared between this remedy picture and the Malaria miasm: family feuding, the feeling of needing help and money from family members; the feelings of frustration, anger, and irritability with other family members.

This feeling is that others will not help them, even to the point that "loved ones are dead" to them and that they cannot trust anyone. They get very angry and frustrated with their spouse or with family members – their "own resourcefulness" becomes the only option remaining.

Many remedies in the Malaria miasm have problems communicating. Some of the main remedies for stammering, like *Niobium*, are in this miasm. One *Phalaenopsis* patient said: "I feel incapable to communicate. That is probably the hardest thing. That is probably the biggest thing. I feel ignored. I get blamed for the miscommunication."

This leads to resentfulness – but this is a resentment without strong bitterness and without the completely closed-off aspect we might see in other Malarial remedies, such as *China officinalis*. (A differentiation may still be required because *China* also has the tendency to confound words and numbers which is part of *Phalaenopsis* and, perhaps, part of the miasm as a whole.)

There is also an element of alienation evident in the Malaria miasm (as well as in the Syphilitic miasm). In this remedy, this alienation is particularly felt in regards to their mother (and family) as previously discussed. The *Phalenopsis* patient has high expectations of their mother and subsequent feeling of resentment, even self-pity, believing they do not get enough care, support, and attention from their mother. They may test the limits of their parents, requiring care and money. Yet, they never feel they are getting the right support from their family, especially their mother and as such, from a young age feel distant and hostile. The memories, hostility, or slights stay with them for a long time, into adulthood.

At a young age, they may start overeating to deal with their emotions and, in spite of difficulty with concentration and focus problems, can become good cooks.

But these feelings can also come about because someone else *is* hostile towards them or as a result of an uncommunicative or very negative mother or family environment. As an adult, they may partner with someone who is argumentative and, while feeling

it necessary to keep it light and harmonious, will nevertheless fall into irritability and anger. They never feel quite part of their family.

I also think of this remedy for children born to a young teenage single parent. The child may have learning disabilities and social problems, and may feel stuck with a desire to escape. In a related manner, the remedy is for someone growing up in a violent household or in a social environment where adults show immature behaviors.

Like most Orchids, there can be periods characterized by a carefree attitude, a lack of concern about being late, for example (which then provokes others). There is also a sensation that time is going too fast, "so fast."
Again, like other Orchids, there is difficulty in falling asleep and when asleep there are many complex and varied dreams. As mentioned above, the theme of being trapped and narrowly escaping is prominent. There were other dreams similar to other Orchids, including dreams of partying, of big parties, and playing.

Likewise, the *Phalaenopsis* proving was no exception to the general Orchid theme of stairs, and of going up and down stairs. In this proving it was more to do with "downstairs" and was related to the theme of food. But the food has a price – it is heavy and requires a lot of work:

> I help carry heavy bags of fruit and vegetables downstairs. Then I feel the weight is lighter and find the bag of vegetables is almost empty. I keep on going downstairs and a man brings a thick stack of vegetables saying that it is what I had dropped. I go to a place. A lady is cooking and says if today is an important day for me she can share some food with me. I said no, my birthday is in October, so I walk away. Another group of people is getting dinner ready so I tell my husband, and we both go to join them for dinner.

As with the *Vanilla* proving there was a theme of purchasing beautiful clothing:

> There is a clothing sale in a beautiful home with many beautiful women with lots of money to spend. The clothes are beautiful and displayed on exquisite hangers. Each item costs $15.00. I chose many items, hats, shoes, dresses. Several women comment by murmuring that I have a lot of things. I react by questioning myself whether that is true but I conclude that I like everything and I will buy them all.

In this prover's dream a particularizing aspect emerges and we see, again, the *Phalaenopsis* patient's sensitivity to what others think of, and say about them – along with the feeling that others are judging them.

Staying with the dreams, there were also many concerning dogs – which implies to me that someone needing this remedy could well be a dog-lover. Some of these dreams involved dogs doing silly things – the idea of frivolity being a strong aspect of the remedy. One such dream involved being "trapped in a house with weird people and lots of dogs." With respect to more threatening (animal or non-human) energy, there were dreams of a spider crawling on the back and also of aliens sucking people up into their spaceships.
As with the proving of *Vanilla planifolia* there were dreams of both bugs and of blue colors. There were also dreams of being pregnant, and in this remedy we do see hormonal problems similar to those evident in other Orchids.

Primary to this particular Orchid, however, remain those dreams related to being lost or that others are lost. Similarly, there is a frustrating and embarrassing aspect related to the dreams of being confused and not knowing what direction to go in.

There was strong sexuality and eroticism, both in the dreams and in general. One prover said she had a "homoerotic dream with two girlfriends of mine on holiday."

The mental dysfunction that is such a strong aspect of the remedy can be reflected on a physical level. We can see a sensation of dizziness, as well as clumsiness. There can be heaviness in the lower limbs. Combining both the theme of food and of difficulty in "processing" what the environment offers, there can be severe digestive problems that result in liquid diarrhea and bloating.

Symptom Guide

Mental/Emotional Symptoms

Confusion and Memory Loss

Difficult concentration
Forgetfulness – cannot remember clearly
Forgetting what has done or what is about to do
Foggy thinking

Louis Klein

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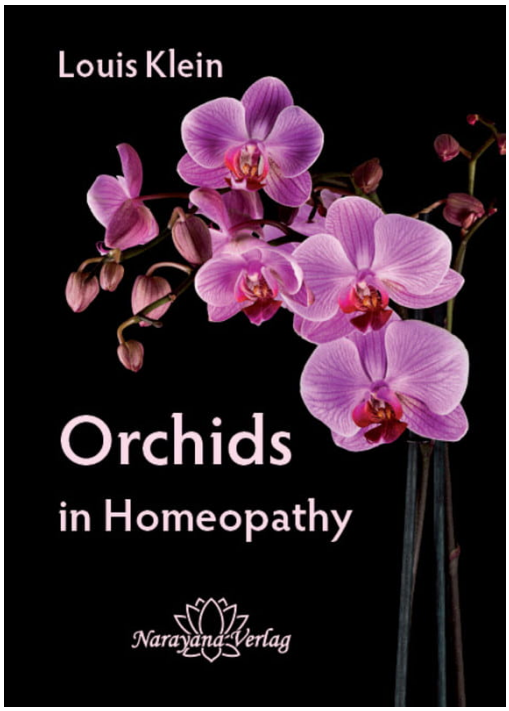

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