# Table of Contents

**Editorial**  
Jacqueline A. Carleton, Ph.D.  

**Energy & Character**  
David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A.  

**Guest Editorial**  
Milton Corrêa, M.Sc., Ph.D. and Esther Frankel, M.A.  

**Interview with David Boadella: February, 2005**  
Esther Frankel, M.A.  

**Basic Concepts in Biosynthesis**  
David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A. & Silvia Specht Boadella, Ph.D.  

**Organ Systems and Lifestyles**  
David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A.  

**Shape Postures and Postures of the Soul: The Biosynthesis Concept of Motoric Fields**  
David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A.  

**The Historical Development of the Concept of Motoric Fields**  
David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A.  

**Embodied Intentionality**  
Milton Corrêa, M.Sc., Ph.D. and Esther Frankel, M.A.  

**The Tree of Man: Fundamental Dimensions of Biosynthesis**  
David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A.  

**Depth-Psychological Roots of Biosynthesis**  
David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A. & Silvia Specht Boadella, Ph.D.  

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USABP Mission Statement  
The USABP believes that integration of the body and mind is essential to effective psychotherapy, and to that end, its mission is to develop and advance the art, science, and practice of body psychotherapy in a professional, ethical, and caring manner in order to promote the health and welfare of humanity. (revised October 1999).
A Tribute to David Boadella and
Energy & Character

Silvia Specht Boadella

David Boadella
Our fifth year of publication begins with an issue honoring the 75th birthday of one of the pioneers of body psychotherapy, David Boadella. He founded *Energy & Character*, which was the first truly integrative body psychotherapy journal. As he points out in his interview with Esther Frankel in this issue, the Journal of Orgonomy preceded *Energy & Character*, but it was a single-modality publication and has remained so to this day.

I had know about the *Journal of Orgonomy* earlier, but I did not hear of the existence of *Energy & Character* until its second year of publication, in 1971, when I began some initial research for my doctoral dissertation. I subscribed immediately, and discovered a whole world of body psychotherapists in Europe. Although I stayed within the limits of Reich and Orgonomy for my dissertation itself, I always relished reading about all the interesting explorations flowering beyond our limited shores.

When at a meeting of the USABP Board of Directors I volunteered to start a Journal, I immediately thought of *Energy & Character* as a model and inspiration. Just as *Energy & Character* had begun with more emphasis on the quality of its content than its visual appeal, I envisioned this Journal as above all a means of communication among our members and the body psychotherapy community at large. I knew that as we grew as a field and as an organization, this Journal would grow in its professionalism and professional appearance.

Along with Silvia Specht Boadella, David Boadella also founded Biosynthesis a few years later, and a number of the articles in this issue explicate various aspects of Biosynthesis. The range of his intellect and interests are also reflected in the few articles in this volume. Not only is he a beautifully clear and original theorist, but he is also an incredibly erudite and widely read scholar. And, from all reports and my own viewing of videotapes, he is an exquisitely sensitive and resourceful clinician. Much of this is sensitively revealed in Esther Frankel’s lengthy interview with David Boadella which inaugurates this volume. The interview is not only a window into the life of this man but also another contribution to the history of body psychotherapy as he recounts his engagements with his contemporaries.

Although virtually every article in this issue makes historical references and comparisons of conceptualization, “The Historical Development of the Concept of Motoric Fields” with its attached Glossary, is the most condensed example. It is a companion to the more fully developed “Shape Postures and Postures of the Soul” based on a lecture given at the 12th World Congress for Psychosomatic Medicine in September of 1993. Here he explicates each of the fields worked with in Biosynthesis and gives clinical examples of how they can be implemented.

Two more recent articles, written with Silvia Specht Boadella, outline major concepts in Biosynthesis, which they have developed together for the past 20 years. “Basic Concepts in Biosynthesis” was written at the request of the World Council for Psychotherapy. “Depth Psychological Roots of Biosynthesis” traces its relationships with ten different branches of psychodynamics and depth psychology. Again, I find myself in awe of the breadth of their knowledge.

“Tree of Man”, published in the late 1990’s, is an exquisite essay using the metaphor of the Tree of Life to emphasize the deeply spiritual dimensions of his thought. The poeticism of its prose style is deeply moving.

At the opposite end of our time spectrum is “Organ Systems and Life Styles”, his earliest work elaborating the embryological model which would have such influence in body psychotherapy and is being increasingly confirmed by current neurobiological research. Here we see his relationships to his progenitors such as Reich and also to others working and writing in the early 1970’s such as Stanley Keleman, Ron Kurtz, Gerda Boyesen and Stan Grof.

“Embodied Intentionality” by Milton Correa and Esther Frankel traces relevant historical roots of the concept of intention in relationship to motoric fields and then gives two clinical examples of its application.

Because of its importance as the first real body psychotherapy journal, I have asked David Boadella to outline its genesis and development for us. His profile of this unique publication follows.

Jacqueline A. Carleton, Ph.D.
Editor
New York City
Spring 2006
The idea for *Energy & Character* grew out of a lecture I gave in London in 1968. People who came to this lecture wanted to stay in touch, and expressed the interest for a newsletter. In 1968 the first Bioenergetic workshop in Europe took place, and in the same year I gave a course to a group in Rome. In 1969 Gerda Boyesen arrived in England, and I set up the first lectures and groups for her there. Later from a lecture in Edinburgh on “Non-verbal communication in psychotherapy”, in 1969 came additional interest. Out of this mixed group of interested persons, came the idea instead of a newsletter to create a Journal: so *Energy & Character* was born, with a title that suggested on the one hand physics and biology, the energetic roots of existence, and on the other hand character, in the psychic and social meanings. Character has roots in ancient Greek which on the one hand refer to the formation of the personality in the culture, and on the other hand relate to the core, or essence of the person, his or her unique individuality.

*Energy & Character* was founded in 1970 as a Biosynthesis journal. It is now the best known body psychotherapy journal in the world, and the second longest established in its field. It has been edited by me as founding editor, with co-editor assistance during the early 1980s from Steve King in England, and between 1994 and 1998 from Andreas Wehowsky in Germany and from 1999 till 2001 by Gisela Wallbruch. Since 2003 the Manager editors are Milton Correa and Esther Frankel. Dr. Silvia Specht Boadella has been co-publisher and co-editor of *Energy & Character* since the beginning of 1999.

*Energy & Character* was formerly produced by Abbotsbury Publications, a publishing house I founded in England. The journal was the publication of the former Centre for Biosynthesis, based in London. Today the journal is the publication of the "International Institute for Biosynthesis IIBS" (Switzerland), where it has been published since the beginning of 1999.

Thanks to its easily understandable style, the journal has been successful where many other more ambitious, high-profile journals ceased publishing after only a few years. In total, we have published more than 100 issues, with well over 10 000 pages of detailed and relevant information. This has included over 800 articles, 310 book reviews and bibliographic features, over 90 congress reports, psychopolitical reports, and other specialised articles on significant body psychotherapy events.

*Energy & Character* has a small, exclusive but highly professional readership consisting of around 650 dedicated subscribers. Around 100 universities, institutional and professional libraries in many parts of the world receive the journal, which is sent to subscribers in about 40 countries worldwide. Over 300 authors have now written for *Energy & Character*, around one third of whom have been women. This is a very good percentage compared with the gender ratio of most publications. A bibliography of the first twenty years of *Energy & Character*, in English, has been published in two volumes totaling 130 pages, itemizing the contents. The editor is David Major.

The authors writing for *Energy & Character* have included the founders of most body psychotherapy schools, including Alexander Lowen, John Pierrakos, Gerda Boyesen, Malcolm Brown, Charles Kelley, Eva Reich and Lillemor Johnson, as well as the first generation of vegeto-therapists such as Ola Raknes and Tage Philipson.

During the past thirty five years, *Energy & Character* has been dedicated to the following themes and more:

a) Prenatal and perinatal psychology with an emphasis on dynamic embryology: In this subject, we concentrate on the roots of our somatic formation and the origins of our psychobiological development.

b) Psychotherapy based on somatic origins and depth psychology: *Energy & Character* has always welcomed many articles from a variety of psychotherapy schools. There is a tradition dating back over many years within body psychotherapy that is founded on depth psychology. Body psychotherapists including Pierre Janet, Paul Schilder, Wilhelm Reich, Otto Rank etc. formed this tradition, upon which Biosynthesis is also based. The psychosomatic branch of psychology etc. is also important in this context.

c) Somatic therapy and complementary medicine also play a role in *Energy & Character* in conjunction with body psychotherapy: In this context we are concerned with a broad spectrum of body-orientated methods, including types of breathing therapy, motion therapy, treatment techniques etc.

d) Social psychology and political aspects: *Energy & Character* also deals with sociological and psychopolitical aspects of health, education, sexuality and ecology.

e) Bio-spirituality and transpersonal psychology: We use the term “bio-spirituality” to mean spirituality that has its roots in the body as well as in the reality of day-to-day life. Transpersonal psychology picks up on a legacy of Eastern and Western traditions that is thousands of years old. The broad field of “energy & consciousness” has developed into one of the most productive and interesting areas of research, particularly within the past decade. In this field, healers, medical doctors and other researchers have united to establish new evidence and new paradigms relating to the expanding area of consciousness that incorporate the physiological effects of meditation and the perception fields of contemplative psychology.
Well-known national and international entities from a variety of schools of (body) psychotherapy deserve our thanks for agreeing to become members of the "International Editorial Advisory Board" of Energy & Character, which provides the quality of Energy & Character with added depth. This Advisory Board will provide the publishers as well as the editors of the journal with constant advice and support. Currently the members of the International Editorial Advisory Board are as follows: Barbara Jakel, Clover Southwell, Esther Frankel, George Downing, Heiko Lassek, Helder Coelho, Jacqueline Carleton, Jerome Liss, Liliana Acero, Marianne Bentzen, Michael Heller, Ole Vedfelt, Peter Levine, Susana B. Volosin Sexter, Ulfrid Geuter, Ulrich Sollman, Victor Seidler, Will Davis.

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It is a pleasure, as guest editors, to announce a whole volume dedicated to David Boadella, a festshrift, coinciding with the commemoration of his 75th birthday and the 4th International Biosynthesis Congress. In this issue we had the honor to interview him, summarizing key developments of his life events, where we tried to capture the flesh and bones of his journey.

It was an exciting project to work on with Jacqueline Carleton, Editor of USABP Journal, who had this wonderful idea and invited us, the producers and managing editors of *Energy & Character*, to realize this project together with her. David’s open mind and heart is reflected in the spirit of his creation of *Energy & Character* Journal, which since 1970 is receptive to new and different ideas, a real integrative journal of body psychotherapy.

It was not easy to select the articles for this issue, among more than a hundred articles and books about embryology, dynamics of the brain, psychotherapy process, dynamics of character, science, ecology, spirituality, among other themes. David Boadella is not only a philosopher, nor a scientist, nor a poet, an educator, a psychologist, a healer, but all of them at the same time. His interests range from quantum physics, biosynthesis of the cell, to Biosynthesis, the psychotherapy model created by him, which supports the integration of the in-dividuum, bridging body, mind and spirituality.

Esther Frankel and Milton Correa
Interview with David Boadella: February, 2005

Esther Frankel, M.A.

Abstract
Esther Frankel interviews for the first time David Boadella in February 2005, from the foundations of his life, groundings from age 35 till 50, his expansions from age 50 to 65 and the consolidations of his personal and professional life from age 65 till today.

Keyword
David Boadella

Esther: Tell me about your early background, David, and how you came to be interested in psychotherapy

David: I was born in London, but grew up in Kent. To the north lay the suburbs of London, to the south was open countryside. I grew up very close to trees, and had great joy in climbing them.

My parents were connected to a spiritual teacher (an open-minded person who taught the root principles of the world’s major spiritual traditions). Both my father and mother were looking for what lay beneath the surface of life. I was a rebellious teenager, nevertheless. One of the key moments in my development was discovering the works of Wilhelm Reich, at the age of 21, in an anarchist bookshop in London.

My parents lived to be very old. My mother was an optimistic person: she loved painting and was very artistic. She died in full awareness when she was 96. Her last message was: I have no regrets about the past, and no fear of the future. As for the present, I still have my grip on life. She was very bright to the end. From my father I learned respect for the roots of knowledge in a wide variety of cultures. He hid his unorthodox soul behind an orthodox exterior.

At school my first interest was literature. This was my main subject at the University of London. My first book, written when I was 25 was called “The Spiral Flame” and was a comparison between the work of the English poet and novelist, D.H. Lawrence, and the work of Reich. I sent a copy to Tage Philipson, the Danish doctor who was Reich’s first client in vegeto-therapy: I met him later in Paris, and he was very fond of the comparison between Lawrence and Reich.

After discovering the books of Reich, I looked for a therapist. I wrote to Reich who told me the nearest Reichian therapist was in Oslo, Ola Raknes. I could not travel to Norway then, but I found a psychiatrist in London who had been trained by Od Havrevold, another Norwegian Reichian. Unfortunately her work was very mechanical: she used nitrous oxide from a gas-and-air machine to induce streamings in her clients. If they got into negative transference, they blamed the machine. I stopped this work after a few months. Later I discovered a very creative man in Nottingham, Paul Ritter, who was passionate about Reich, and practiced a very humane and sensitive form of intuitive vegeto-therapy. Reich wrote him a letter of support. He became my first real therapist.

Later Ola Raknes came to London regularly, and I could take a series of intensive sessions from him.

Esther: What was it like to work with Raknes as a therapist?

David: Raknes was over 80 at this time, he had extraordinary energy. He was a very grounded kind of man and he worked not so much with words, but more with touch, with melting points of the armour and mobilizing energy. He practised classical vegeto-therapy as he had learned this from Reich. He was in his mid-eighties, and I was at that time 39. He liked to do a process to help the client to relax - he wanted the client to be completely stiff. So I would be lying down and he would say “make yourself completely stiff like a board”, and then he’d take my neck and lift me to standing, which needs a lot of strength, then lower me down again, and then he said “now relax”.

It was a paradoxical intervention: stiffening in order to relax.

Raknes was a respectful, non-invasive therapist, who paid great attention to body signals. Once he had a client who said “Doctor, I feel like a corpse”. He looked at his client and saw one toe was moving. So he said “I never saw a corpse move its toe”. Then the toe moved the foot, the foot moved the leg, one leg activated the other, and the man changed his job a few weeks later.

Esther: At that time Reich was still living?
David: Reich was still alive, living in US and I had one letter from him recommending Ola Raknes. I also wrote, in 1952 as a young student, a letter to Nic Waal (who was a doctor trained by Reich in Oslo) asking her who is now available to do vegeto-therapy. I received a 4 page letter back from her, giving me the whole history of vegeto-therapy in Oslo and telling me some very important things. She said that unless we do a contained building-up of the ego, we can create psychosis in our clients. So I was getting a message from a leading vegeto-therapist (she was the director of an Institute of Psychiatry in Oslo), which was giving me, as a young student who was just beginning, the very clear message that containment is needed if you are going to work with strong energies and strong emotional expression. This message I never forgot.

Esther: What did you do when you finished your university studies in London?

David: When I finished my studies I moved to Nottingham to take my therapy with Paul Ritter. I decided at that time to become a teacher and work with children because I was interested in emotional issues of children because of my Reichian interests in the prevention of neurosis. I later took a Master’s degree in Education. I got my first job teaching children parallel to taking my therapy from Paul Ritter.

In 1957, after 5 years with Paul Ritter, and studying orgonomy at his research institute, I took my first client parallel to my teaching. So I now had one client and when his therapy was finished one year later, I wrote up the case. It was called “The Treatment of a Compulsive Character”. After writing it I heard about Alexander Lowen and I wrote to him and sent him this case study. He wrote back and gave me encouraging and supportive feedback.

Esther: How did your work in education relate to your work as a therapist?

David: I was working with maladjusted children, aged between 7 and 11. My Master’s thesis at the University of Nottingham applied the early attachment theory of John Bowlby, and Donald Stott, to the motoric behaviour of children. I worked with their signals and signs of emotional experience.

By “signs” Bowlby and Stott meant what is shown in facial expression, body gesture. So I wrote twenty case studies, in my thesis, of children I was teaching, in which I dealt with their emotional issues, and with how they signalled these in non verbal language and how they could be helped by the kind of therapeutic interventions I mention below in the normal teaching context. All this was described in my Master’s thesis published in 1960.

For example: if a child is repressing aggression, how can you help him? So I created a situation, in a pause, or in physical education time, and I said – here is a mattress. How much dust can you take from this mattress? This was a neutral way of helping to re-channel aggression non-destructively. I didn’t say let yourself be angry. I just said: create some more dust.

Another example: I had a child who was very inhibited, a very anxious child and I gave him a big piece of paper and I said, “See if you can scribble on this paper.” He started very timidly in one corner of the paper, and then developed the courage to fill the page with intense expression. I noticed afterwards that in the physical education lessons, where usually he would walk around the wall because he was afraid to go in the middle of the room, he would now trust himself to expand his space.

Esther: How were you accepted by other teachers?

David: That’s interesting, too. One of these teachers was the first client I mentioned, and he said to me, “I need therapy. You know something about Reich - where do I get therapy?”. I told him the nearest Reichian therapist is in Oslo. He said, “But you have a therapist in England.” So he wrote to my therapist, but he did not have a space for him. The teacher then said “Well, I have to work with you.” I told him, “I’m not a therapist.” “But now you are,” he said, “because I’m your first client.” So that is how we started.

Esther: Fantastic!

David: My second client was more borderline, much more difficult, his case was also published. It is called “The Divided Body”. He was a very schizoid man, my second client. Then, another teacher in the school had an emotional crisis during the time I was teaching there. I couldn’t help him therapeutically but he was a friend of mine and I supported him emotionally just as a friend.

I worked at that time under a repressive head master, a very conservative tight minded authoritarian man, who left me completely free in my classroom but outside the classroom the children had to be very controlled and so forth.
So I taught my children - inside here you can behave like this but outside the classroom you have to behave differently.

**Esther:** They could do this? They liked you?

**David:** The children liked this atmosphere. They had to learn that when they cross outside the classroom, life outside is different. This work with children was very important because in England education was in general freer than in much of Europe at that time. A. S. Neill, whom I knew personally, had a big influence indirectly on English education; and the principle of English education in that age was play. Do it playfully - and this attitude of play influenced me years before I became a regular therapist. This playful attitude, in therapy, is the opposite of the over-severity which some psychiatrically trained persons bring to their work.

**Esther:** It is the opposite of clinical psycho-pathologism.

**David:** Yes, it is emphasizing the resources in the child, and helping to draw them out. This is the literal meaning of the word education, which comes from the root *e-ducere*. It is the same focus in our therapeutic work with adults. The emphasis is on creativity in expression. I was doing a lot in my educational work with poetry art, drama, dance (which I learned from the Laban Institute), and with martial arts, such as Judo. Judo was helpful for children to have more trust in their bodies. I was introducing a lot of creative work in school.

**Esther:** So, this work with children laid a basis for your therapeutic work?

**David:** Before I started working with adults on a regular basis, therapeutically, I had already spent fourteen years working with children in schools.

**Esther:** Because I feel that when you work, you work in a very playful way. You are contacting the inner child of the client, not necessarily with words, but in how you approach them.

**David:** Part of preparation for that was work with the children in this free atmosphere of making space for their expression. I published two books of poems by children in the school period and the first one was published just after I started the therapeutic period in London. This was produced a few years after I moved to Abbotsbury School in Dorset, and became the Head Teacher there. I had many years in Abbotsbury School with complete freedom to create an environment that drew children out of their normal expectations.

The first published book of poetry by the children I taught, was called "Handfuls of Light" this title was a phrase from a poem by one of the children.

I became 50 years old before they closed the school due to a narrow educational policy under Margaret Thatcher. I lived in this village for 22 years. It was a mile from the coast, and I could always hear the sea in the night. I have always had a strong connection to the sea, and all my life I was living near water, by the sea, or a river, or overlooking a lake: water is a very important part of creation. My old Professor in Nottingham wanted me to teach in the University. He told me “don't get yourself into a backwater,” but I moved beside the backwater in Dorset, which lies behind Chesil beach on the south coast. I even lived on Back Street.

Then, during that period in Abbotsbury, soon after I had moved to Dorset, I had a letter from Alexander Lowen who invited me to write the introduction of his book "Love and Orgasm". I was the only person he knew in England that was interested in Reich. So I wrote the introduction, and this introduction was read by the American, Malcolm Brown, who was also interested in Reich. So he invited me to London in 1967 to give a lecture to people interested in Reich and I called this lecture “Beyond Therapy”, because I wanted the people to be aware of their inner potential, creativity and capacity for self-help, and of what is non-pathological in them besides the problems that might lead to therapy. Today we would say this was putting a major emphasis on their resources.

**Esther:** This was in a way a consequence of your work with art, poetry, music?

**David:** Yes. Paradoxically, out of this lecture for thirty people came five or six who wanted therapy: so indirectly I gained a regular therapeutic practice. From Abbotsbury I went to London every second Saturday and I soon built up a clientele in a common practice, at the beginning with Malcolm Brown and then with Aaron Esterston, a colleague of R. D. Laing. I built up a practice of twelve clients. I worked from 8 in the morning till 8 in the evening, and then I went home.
During the first half of my adult life I was married to Elsa Corbluth who was a very gifted writer and who became a quite well known poet in England. Living with her I could deepen and intensify my poetic connections, and also my connection to landscape. Elsa was a passionate mountain climber: it was a deep pleasure that we shared, and mountain climbing was always an important part of my grounding of my physical expression. After climbing trees as a child came climbing mountains. These were part of my deep connections to my first wife, Elsa.

**Esther:** How many years did you spend together?

**David:** Until the teaching was finished. So we had over 30 years together. These were very important roots of my connection to poetry.

In this period when I started to go to London, that was the beginning of my regular profession with therapeutic work.

In 1968, the year I started in London, I went to Rome to lecture on vegeto-therapy. Federico Navarro was a medical student who came to the lecture, and later trained in vegeto-therapy.

In 1969 - one year later- Gerda Boyesen came to London. I set up her first course of lectures for her and soon after I started my second personal therapy and further training with Raknes. This was a whole opening for me as a country boy - living in Abbotsbury, in the back water, from Back Street. I was going to London, studying with Raknes, and teaching in Rome. In 1968 I was one of those who invited Alexander Lowen to lead the first Bioenergetic workshop in Europe.

I also went to the University of Edinburgh and gave a lecture to British Psychological Association and this lecture was part a seminar on non verbal communication, and became the first chapter of my book *Life Streams*. It is called "Language of the Body".

In 1970 I started the journal *Energy & Character*: So the backwater was not such a backwater and the Journal was very interesting. Somebody told me that we needed a newsletter. The first subscribers were members of the Wilhelm Reich Study Group in London, trainees of Gerda Boyesen, vegeto-therapy students from Rome, colleagues from the University of Edinburgh, and members of the Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis, in New York.

E&C is not the longest running body psychotherapy journal, because the Journal of Orgonomy has been running for three more years. But, we have produced more issues, over a hundred have been published so far. So I founded the most productive journal in the field of body psychotherapy in the world. All that started in Backstreet by the backwater.

**Esther:** Can I ask you something? At that time, I can see you were open and could help all the body psychotherapy streams to come together in your journal. Besides helping Lowen, and Gerda, of course you were developing yourself. I think this basis is so important to be written about.

**David:** That was a very important time. It was just after the political student revolution in 1968. The Growth Centres grew out of this period. The first Growth Centre in Europe was in London, where I was working. So I had connection here, and this was a place where Eva Reich also came and worked. We made an important connection there. Later she was a guest trainer at our Institute.

**Esther:** What do you mean by Growth Centre?

**David:** A Growth Centre is a humanistic organization which is teaching different kinds of psychotherapeutic approaches and self-development and is part of humanistic movement that was starting just as this time.

Just around the time I started to work in London was the birth of the Humanistic Psychology Movement in America and later in London. I was appointed as one of the directors of the Institute for the Development of Human Potential, in London, which pioneered humanistic and body-oriented approaches in England and abroad. I was invited a few years ago to attend the 40th anniversary of the humanistic movement, which was founded in America, because they recognized me as one of the founders of the humanistic movement.

A few years later came the invitation to write my historical study on Wilhelm Reich, *Wilhelm Reich: the evolution of his work*. 

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Then, in 1971, Lowen invited me to be the guest of his congress, because of *Energy & Character*. He organized the first Congress in Bioenergetics in Mexico, on a wonderful island by the water – again more water- and this is called The Island of Women - Isla Mujeres. I was rather honored by this special status.

In reality the journal soon became a mouthpiece of Biosynthesis which was developing around that time, but the journal was open to publish articles from Biodynamic and Bioenergetics and many other different directions because I was a bridge builder and not a splitter. I was building bridges between these different movements which I saw as cousins to my own work. We had a friendly relationship with these movements and later I became an invited guest trainer in many of the body-psychotherapy directions. I was teaching my work in their trainings before I had my own training.

Before this congress of Lowen, even before I started in London, I had a very important meeting with a man who I knew of through the *Paul Ritter Journal*. This was Stanley Keleman. Stanley Keleman knew of me early because of what I had written in a journal published by Paul Ritter, and he came to visit me in Dorset in 1966. This was my first meeting with Stanley Keleman and I re-met him a few years later in 1971, in Mexico.

I again met Keleman in 1973 and formed a very good connection with him and this connection was repeated in meetings in many different places. Keleman for me was a very important inspiration, because he helped me to see through the limitations of the classical Reichian model.

I again met Keleman in 1973 and formed a very good connection with him and this connection was repeated in meetings in many different places. Keleman for me was a very important inspiration, because he helped me to see through the limitations of the classical Reichian model.

These limitations were to do with too much outside pressure to go in a particular direction and too little focus on the individual process and on the awareness of containment for pulsation.

**Esther:** How did he help you?

**David:** I'll tell you how. I was on the island of Isla Mujeres in the middle of the wonderful sea off the coast of Mexico, in April, in 1971 and all the congress members were enjoying the sun and the fresh air and movement and swimming and surfing. But there was a particular participant, a woman who seemed strangely out of touch. Keleman understood her energetic condition from a therapeutic context. He told me, "When she streams, she splits." This sentence impressed me at the time. It turned out that she was, in fact, rather borderline, very on the edge, quite spacey and ungrounded. She had become over-identified with her energy flow but she had too little form, she had lost contact with the ground and with her feet.

Keleman had understood that streaming without grounding can be a form of splitting.

This was a very significant moment for me. I became aware that the classical Reichian work as developed after Reich's death was sometimes in danger of becoming a technique and of pushing the client too much in a particular direction and not enough following the hidden signals, which I had been studying with my children in my therapeutic work within the educational field. This later Reichian work had become more mechanical, as Reich had warned could develop. Reich himself always put a major emphasis on the level of vital human contact between therapist and client, parent and child.

Then I realized that the classical Reichian work may be important and valuable work for rigid people, but as soon as you have a traumatized person, or a borderline person, or a weak ego structure, this work can do exactly what Nic Waal had warned me about in 1952. It can create psychotic states or fragmented states of re-traumatization, and therefore in such cases the emphasis needs to be on forming better boundaries, which she called ego building, and which Keleman was calling containment.

Keleman and I were there at the beginning of this process, and then something very interesting happened. I travelled in 1974 to the Esalen Congress on Reich, in San Francisco, and on the way I flew over the North Pole and as I looked down I saw the water, ice and something in between - half water, half ice. And I had the insight, sitting in the plane flying over the North Pole, that we have extremes of liquidity and solidity and in between is the liquid crystal that is the basis of life. Liquid without structure is not life. Neither is structure without fluidity. I realized that too much liquidity is like floating away. It reminded me of spacing out, and coma-like states of trance. Convulsion, on the other hand, is more like hysterical process - everything is too tight and contracted.

So, ice is like a contraction as in convulsion and water is like a free flow which is needing ground, a river in search of banks; in between this crystallized form which is life. That was the beginning of a series of articles I later wrote called “Between coma and convulsion.”
When I arrived in San Francisco for the Esalen Congress, I stayed in Keleman’s house and I told him about my experience of the north pole and he reached out behind him towards his book shelf and pulled up a book he had written (Your Body Speaks its Mind). He opened it, and read me a passage which began:

> Once flying into San Francisco over the salt flats I looked down and suddenly saw how a supersaturated solution begins to form a crystal. I saw a crystalizing field in the water”. He went on to describe his own prior observations of states of excitation, and of pulsation within boundaries.

Keleman just laughed, because we had in this way very parallel insights and this was a very interesting moment in my understanding of polarity. The polarity that connects is the opposite of a duality that splits. This was the beginning of my insights into the treatment of trauma, and a very important moment in the understanding of the polarity concept, which became central in Biosynthesis. It was the beginning of my move beyond the classical Reichian model which emphasizes the importance of breathing out, and letting go, with the risk of forgetting the other pole, related to breathing in, digesting experience, building form and containing energy.

Esther: And it is so interesting when we see people in your group here. How some people need to let go and how some people need really to organize and build their ego.

David: Building the ego in our understanding means coordinating perception, and coordinating motility. It has to do with the voluntary principle, the autonomy principle. For many borderline clients their main problem is loss of autonomy. They have become helpless victims of the circumstances of their life story.

Understanding how to get the right balance between expressive release and the creation of flexible boundaries was the foundations of our work with trauma which went back to the early 1970’s.

Esther: When did you start to speak about stress?

David: That was around the same time, and this came from an invitation by Jay Stattman, who later on was the moving force in setting up the first European body psychotherapy congress. He was biodynamically trained and later became the founder of Unitive Psychotherapy. I knew him in London and he invited me to talk at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. This was a very nice invitation because the Tavistock was then the principal headquarters of attachment theory in England. Here I could go beyond my master’s thesis, which applied attachment theory within education. I was being invited into the principal British centre of good psychodynamic understanding of the human being, and was being asked to speak about my therapeutic understanding of polar concepts of character, which in turn reflect the energetic polarity I had described in the earlier articles on coma and convulsion.

For example “freeze or run,” the character pattern of going inside and shrinking, or the opposite pattern - run away as fast as you can outside. Here I was influenced by the work of Frank Lake, who I had at that stage not met. I knew only his theoretical work.

Esther: Who was Frank Lake?

David: Frank Lake was a very creative man who brought together clinical psychiatry and a Christian-based theology. He had similar views to those of Reich in his book The Murder of Christ. Lake was also a co-director, with me, and others, of the Institute for the Development of Human Potential in London, from 1977 onwards.

Frank Lake was very interested in the prenatal aspects of development. He also had understood that energetic polarities underlie character development, He wrote about this at length in relation to the schizo-hysteric swing, which he also saw as a trans-marginal response to stress. So Frank Lake helped to bring this polarity concept into therapeutic understanding, and part of that insight was that we have motoric patterns such as running away, reaching out, and so forth.

My interest in motility started very early because in 1964, after I had started my therapeutic work, I wrote a theoretical study of motility and evolution. I studied movement from the amoeba through different animals going up to man. It was a biosocial study of motoric behaviour. I was very interested in movement.

Esther: Why were you interested in movement at that time? You were a teacher.
David: This interest came in part from my early contact with Reichian work. I was very impressed with the chapter in Reich's book, *Character Analysis*, about the expressive language of the living. Reich was writing about the amoeba, the process of primal expansion and contraction. Reich was focused primarily on the emotional expression. But of course emotional expression for Reich was linked with movements, vegetative movements, orgasm reflex, reaching out. Reich was very much focused on contact and one of the contact channels is expressive movement, which had been a focus of this study I did for my master's thesis on the signs and signals of the child.

But parallel to my work in school at that time, Elsa gave birth to our two children, my son and my daughter. Adam, which means earth, was born in 1960. My daughter Eilidh, which means light, was born one year later. It was a very good time in our lives when we could share the growing up of our children beside the sea, and enjoy their development in the creative context of the school, where Elsa was also involved. So I was able to look first hand at how children developed and how emotion developed, and what was happening with body expression. As a therapist, I was very interested in how expression begins and then to support my teaching work, I started to take some courses on creative dance. I was going to dance workshops and learning through dance teaching from Laban Institute Teachers, such as Lisa Ullmann and Diana Jordan. These insights were further developed and came into Biosynthesis as what we have since called “impulse qualities.”

This was another early beginning of what later we called the motoric fields of Biosynthesis. Then several years later in 1975 I started training within my first therapeutic groups in London, at the Churchill Centre, organized by a colleague of Frank Lake.

In the same year, I was invited to lead a group in New York State. I had a very intense experience there which connected me deeply to the principles which we call “centering, grounding and facing,” which are related to the three embryological germ layers in the body, and their later expressions in the adult body as affect, behaviour and cognitions or beliefs. This was a kind of baptism for Biosynthesis. After this my work became deeper and more organic, and I developed more trust in the group-energy between people. The word “Biosynthesis”, which means integration of life, is one expression of those insights from that time.

Esther: I know that there was a crisis in your personal life around this time.

David: During the later part of the 1970’s there was a crisis in my family, induced by the late adolescence of my son, Adam. The crisis my son went through involved drugs. He took LSD, got disoriented through these experiences, and came into an emergency situation in which I was needing to draw on everything I knew or did not know about this kind of event induced by drugs. What I found out was that I had to study very quickly what LSD does in the brain, because I wanted to understand practical things that could be done to help a person like my son in this kind of crisis. I discovered some of the effects of LSD in the brain, and what these do to the normal body and to the neurotransmitters.

Esther: How did this help you to deal with his crisis?

David: I looked at ways to interrupt the negative neurotransmitter pathways through vitamins. I found a particular combination of vitamins that could help to re-stabilize the brain. It is not so much that my therapeutic understanding helped me to deal with this crisis, but dealing with it helped to deepen my therapeutic understanding. In fact, it works both ways.

In this way I could partly help my son to get himself back. I wrote up these insights, and it became a 120 page book called *The Charge of Consciousness*. It consisted of a very complicated combination of biochemistry, which I knew almost nothing about to begin with, and psychodynamic process, which I knew a lot about, and pre-psychotic process, which I knew of therapeutically, but not in relation to what is happening in the process of the brain. So I was putting together in this book, therapeutic experience, psychodynamics, and brain biochemistry, as well as a study of some altered states of consciousness. It's a complicated mixture!

I wrote it in two weeks, non-stop, because it was a crisis. I took it to my printer and said, “I want this quickly.” The book was in my hands two weeks later, a month from the first writing on the typewriter to the book sitting in my hands. This is probably the most densely written text I have ever produced, because I wrote in a kind of state of overcharge. I still go back to this book and read it now as a kind of neurobiological resource. I am always surprised with what I find in it. So much was packed in there in those two weeks!
It was a kind of death and rebirth crisis my son went through. He came out of it stronger and more spiritually aware, and has never touched any drugs since. In fact, he became very interested in alternative herbal medicine. Unfortunately, a few months later my family went through a second traumatic crisis.

That was when my daughter, Eilidh, who was 18, decided what she wanted to do in her life. She wanted to go to work at a hostel for the homeless in London called The House of Peace, which was operated on behalf of Mother Teresa, and to work as a helper with the homeless people there. She was not a Catholic, but she was a committed Christian, who wanted to help people in her own way.

The day she went to London, for her first day of work, on that same night there was a fire. It was lit by an alcoholic woman, with a history of arson. Twenty people were in the hostel, and ten died that night. One of them was my daughter. It was a total tragedy!

**Esther:** How did all this development of yours, professional and personal, help you to understand and to contain and deal with your pain?

It took me years to deal with this. But, deep questions came up like. “What is the meaning of life beyond the body, beyond this existence?” It led me out, very strongly, to the spiritual aspects of my work related to understanding better the connections between body and soul, hope and despair, fate and faith in something deeper. These insights, which grew out of the tragedy were later part of the last chapter of *Lifestreams*, which is called “The womb, the tomb and the spirit”.

So, this painful tragedy, when I worked through it, gave me a deeper inner ground for my therapeutic work.

This double crisis brought on many major changes in my personal life. Shortly afterwards, in 1981, the school I had worked in for 22 years was closed because of political decisions in England at that time.

I had just reached the age of 50, which is the earliest legal age to retire, and I had just passed that age by 2 months. Before that, I could not retire. Now I could retire. I could receive a small pension in England as a teacher who had stopped early. This was now a great opportunity to expand my therapeutic work, for the first time full time.

**Esther:** That was a kind of a professional birth?

**David:** Yes, while I was digesting the immense pain of the death of my daughter, I stopped teaching for some weeks. When I resumed teaching for a further year, I was also continuing my therapeutic work and was beginning to transmute some aspects of this pain into helping other people who were traumatized by closeness to death in ways that could be very catastrophic. One of the insights I had during that period was that we have envelopes of experience around us. We have negative and positive circles of events. We experience agony, and trauma, or maybe wars, and death. Then I had a feeling: What is in the outmost circle of these spheres of experience? What is the ultimate outermost envelope of containment at the end of this? Is it positive or negative? I had the feeling that beyond the hurt and horror was one further enveloping circle. This outer envelope is not destructive but creative and supportive. We are carried, in this sense, by the cosmos.

One of the first people to ring me after this death was Stanley Keleman, who heard about it from somebody in London. I didn't tell him. He must have spoken to somebody in London who had said: “David has had a disaster”. He rang me from California, very briefly and he said: “It's time that you take some help. Put her in your heart and grow her as your soul”. Some statement that is! Such a gift at a time of disaster! Yes, this was a wonderful gift. I had, of course, hundreds of people writing me things, but the more they wrote, the less they affected me. But, just this one sentence I remember for the rest of my life

**Esther:** I’m learning from both of you how to meditate through my body, which began with you recommending me to do Kum Nye. When I began to do this, I felt I could regain my connection with my people, who are dead, and like this I can still be with them, they are with me and they continue as part of my soul. Wasn’t it about this time that we first met?

**David:** Yes, the first group I did, after this death was in May of 1980, in Salvador Brazil.

You were a member of that group, Esther. So this group, when I came to Salvador, was also a birthing because it was the first time I worked with my Biosynthesis groups in South America.
Esther: Yes, this work in South America was the nucleus of the future Biosynthesis trainer community, the beginning of a whole process of expansion.

David: I would like to come back to your question about how I dealt with the pain. I had been living in back street for nearly 20 years, travelling to London, sometimes taking a big trip to South America, or Australia, but until this time I had been basically anchored in my environment, teaching next door to where I lived. It was 10 steps from my house to the school. I travelled occasionally, but that was the exception.

My father was somebody who wanted to sail around the world in ships, but he never got the chance and became a worker in the port of London, watching ships coming in and going out. His life script somehow was “life begins at home.”

My 22 years kept me anchored in a wonderful landscape beside my doorstep. Then, suddenly the school was closed and I had no money, except for my pension. I have no work, my rented house is gone, and I’ve lost one of my children. What am I going to do with my life?

Esther: So this was quite a crisis of transition for you.

David: Yes, a deep midlife crisis, rather later than usual. Then I decided: this is my opportunity to grow. Elsa was shaping her own response to the crisis, the double crisis. She decided to update her career. She went to study at university for the first time, and took a master’s degree in creative writing, which supported her life-long interest in poetry. But, we were increasingly taking time off from each other, professionally and personally. So, we were drifting apart, at this level. She was getting her creative writing degree. I was getting my opportunity to expand my work. I was dealing with pain by travelling away, out of the whole area. I travelled for 5 years, practically non-stop. I travelled to 30 countries in these 5 years. I have travelled to the moon and back, in terms of distance. Part of that was dealing with my pain. Part of that was having the opportunity to build.

One of the first places I worked in, actually before the school was closed, was Japan. A man who had read my early book The Spiral Flame wrote to me. He later went to Japan and became a professor of literature at a University of Kanazawa there. English literature, remember, had been my first subject. He invited me to Japan to teach Biosynthesis there. There I met a colleague of his who was a professor of literature and philosophy in the same university where he was, and who helped in the organization of my visit.

This was Silvia, a wonderful human being, and a creative philosopher and writer: we fell in love and she became my second partner. This was again a rebirth. So around this time I had a complete change around: I was coming through a separation process with Elsa. This was very painful for both of us, but we have managed to keep a very good friendship, and still maintain a deep and important contact. In this period of change, I was developing my new relationship with Silvia, I had given up the school, I would eventually, give up my country and my language, and my house. I had the feeling my ground was a pair of shoes. I had the feeling, in a way, this was giving up everything I had except my work and gaining everything I have had ever since: a second life, a second opportunity.

Biosynthesis grew up out of our love for each other and our love for working deeply with people in an embodied spiritual way, with the deepest feelings that they bring, which we support and encourage as processes of self-healing.

Esther: You were 50 years old then?

David: I was 50 just after Eilidh died, but 54 when I moved to Switzerland. Quite late for a new beginning. I stopped my world travels and moved to Zurich in 1985. At the same time Silvia and I were together, and we started a training with Bob Moore.

Bob Moore was a wonderfully intuitive psychic teacher, who understood the subtle energy circulation of the body better than anyone else I have ever met. I first met him in London several years before, through clients of mine who knew him. When Eilidh died he rang me up to express his support.

In this period of transition, Silvia and I had started a training with him in Denmark, and that was a 15 year process. We were going every year for several different weeks. Bob Moore’s way of understanding human beings became
a vital support to our work in Biosynthesis and brought in a deeper understanding and practice of working with subtle energy.

Esther: Tell me about how Silvia coming into your life changed Bio-synthesis?

David: Silvia’s contributions to Biosynthesis have been incalculable. It was from our interaction together at the very beginning that the theme of the seven life fields of Biosynthesis emerged, which forms the most comprehensive and integrative model and expression of how we work.

The life fields are grounded in the seven energy centres of the body, which were particularly emphasised in her own subtle energy work in the training. She brings a centred quality of presence to her work, which people find very inspiring. She holds a Ph.D. in philosophy together with psychology, literature and art, and she can challenge people to think about who they are and what they are doing at much deeper levels than is usual in this kind of work.

Our son, Till, born in 1988, was a source of great joy to us both, and a continuing learning at a deeper level about processes of natural child development. As well as being the mother of a young child, Silvia carried the lion's share of the developmental energy in the content and structures of the Biosynthesis trainings, as well as of the household. I often reproach myself that I did not do more to support her in this immense undertaking.

Silvia brought to Biosynthesis her own unique qualities of energy, compassion, and clarity, in the development of the philosophical and psycho-dynamic frame of our work, in the individual therapeutic accompaniment of our trainees, and through her very special feeling for group energy and group process.

At the time I moved to Switzerland, Biosynthesis had been taught around the world, but it had no home. Silvia used her organisational talents in the tremendous work finding buildings, organizing the European trainings, and supervising the administrative structures that made our teaching possible.

We both worked hard for political recognition for Biosynthesis. I did this at the European level, where I achieved the scientific recognition of our work from the EAP at Brussels in 1998. This was itself based on the work Silvia had done gaining recognition within the Swiss Psychotherapy Charta, and dealing with other professional associations in the German language area. Later, the building of the International Foundation for Biosynthesis, to integrate all the trainings that had grown up in many other countries, was also her work. This was like polishing a diamond, and cutting the faces, until the final structure was coherent and warmly appreciated by our community.

Her contributions to Biosynthesis have been incalculable at many different levels. To do justice to these contributions would require a separate story of the past 20 years.

In 1994, the International Institute for Biosynthesis, which she had founded, moved to its permanent home, in the foothills of the Alps, overlooking Lake Constance, with a view over four countries. Silvia master-minded and supervised the thousand details of reconstruction and design of an ecologically sound building which is now the structure to contain our therapeutic work.

When we held our open day for the public, a few months later, the Health Minister came, looked at the exhibition we had mounted, and commented “This is a work about the heart, in a place for the heart”.

After jointly leading some eighteen Biosynthesis five-year trainings in Switzerland, we are finally finding time for working on a series of books, some jointly, some independently, in which the latest messages about our work and our lives can find expression.

Biography

Esther Frankel (M.A.) was born in 1948 in Brazil, daughter of Jews from Poland. She is one of the pioneers of Body Psychotherapy in Brazil. She is a clinical psychologist trained by Jean Piaget’s team at the University of Geneva. As a Body Psychotherapist she was trained by Gerda Boyesen, David Boadella, Alexander Lowen, and Albert Pesso. She is a member of the European Association for Body Psychotherapy. She was a teacher of Pontificia Universidade Catolica of Rio de Janeiro. She is an International Trainer in Biosynthesis, Director of the Biosynthesis School of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Director of the Biosynthesis Training for Portugal, Director of the Biosynthesis Training for Israel. She trains psychotherapists in several countries.
Basic Concepts in Biosynthesis

David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A.
Silvia Specht Boadella, Ph.D.

Abstract
This article was written as an account about Biosynthesis, a method which is active in more than three continents, asked by the World Council for Psychotherapy. It includes information on the content of the method and also on format and organizational aspects of the Training. It was first published as “Biosynthesis” by Silvia Specht Boadella and David Boadella in the book Globalised Psychotherapy, edited by Alfred Pritz, Facultas Universitätsverlag, Vienna 2000.

Keywords
Basic concepts of biosynthesis - Biosynthesis - Format - Origin

The word “Biosynthesis” means “integration of life”. Biosynthesis works with self-formation processes, which encourage organic growth, personal development and spiritual integrity. The objective of our work is to forge a link between the three essential aspects of human existence:

• Somatic, or body existence
• Psychological experience and
• Spiritual essence.

When we work with the body in the context of Biosynthesis, we draw on the principles of embryology. We aim to integrate breathing patterns, muscle tone and the expression of emotion, in other words to harmonise them so that they flow together as a whole.

The methods of Biosynthesis are oriented around the principles of organic growth. Biosynthesis works with movements such as the wave forms of rhythmic breathing, to release inhibited intentionality and stimulate new embodiments of the psyche.

When we work with the psyche, the aim is to integrate feeling, thinking and acting. These are the three most important factors that form and shape an individual. They exert a constant interactive influence on each other, and also constantly influence the dynamic shape flow of the body. Biosynthesis also relates to the human potential hidden within trauma, as well as the function of somatic resonance and interpersonal presence.

The spiritual foundation of Biosynthesis emphasises the central aspect of empathy - for oneself as well as for others. It is based on the idea that the qualities of our essence need to be “grounded” in everyday reality. Biosynthesis is a process-orientated path of development, which recognises the individual as unique and multidimensional, and acknowledges that the individual possesses a broad spectrum of development potential.

In Biosynthesis, we use our somatic, depth psychological and transpersonal understanding to perceive the intentional language of an individual in an intuitive way, without imposing norms or making interpretations as to what and how a person should be.

Biosynthesis encompasses ten main themes and the corresponding theories, methods and practices for each:

Centering means to deal with personal values and personal identities. This covers the somatic, psychological and spiritual identity of an individual. The fundamental question in this context is “Who am I?”

Facing means the interaction between internal and external goals. In this case the question is “Where am I going?”

Grounding means the development of effective life management strategies, appropriate levels of assertiveness, efficient and compassionate behaviour. The question is “How do I get there?”

Holding concerns the principles of personal boundaries, self-preservation, and security, which in this context refers to the individual and social surroundings. The question is “Whom and what can I trust?”

Bonding aims to encourage contact with others, intersubjectivity, verbal and non-verbal interchange. The question is: “Who can I communicate with and how can I improve my contacts?”

Bounding covers understanding, recognition, or negotiating of one’s own or other’s boundaries and borders, both private and public, personal and social. Social conflicts often occur for instance as a result of ambiguities when drawing up territorial boundaries. The question is “What and where are my boundaries and how can I approach conflict in a constructive way?”

Charging offers opportunities to release personal energy from a static or stagnant situation, to arouse vitality and nourish creativity. Question: “Where and what are my sources of strength, and how can I improve the uptake, circulation and output of my energy?”

Sounding links our language with the depths of experience and encourages the ability to listen to others empathetically and to communicate effectively. For this, you must be good at self-reflection, observing inner monologues and mental patterns. The question is “How do I communicate?”
Shaping means finding and developing skills, work opportunities, competence, meaningful and practical areas of application for them, and organisational structures. Question: “How can I turn my dreams into reality?”

Valuing aims for an increased perception of our eco-social environment and an embodied understanding of the roots of our human existence in nature, our effect on the world. Question: “What values do I have and how can I behave ethically?”

Biosynthesis addresses the fundamental needs of every individual with respect to physical well-being, psychological experience and spiritual development.

**Biosynthesis - a somatic and depth-psychological psychotherapy**

Just as the word Biosynthesis means “integration of life”, so the word psychotherapy comes from the Greek meaning “to heal the soul”. Biosynthesis as a form of psychotherapy encompasses a multi-dimensional perspective of the person. It incorporates different life fields experience and expression. These life fields are manifest in two different forms, as a closed system and as an open system within a person. Closed systems cause character problems, physical inhibitions and spiritual contractions. Open systems reflect psychic contact, energetic vitality and a link with the qualities of the heart.

The life fields shown in the following diagram lead us to seven basic therapeutic working areas and to a broad spectrum of working methods:

Each of the six external segments of the diagram describes a life field. The closed position is in the outside circle, and the open one in the middle circle. The middle circle is closely linked with the centre, which represents the essence of an individual. The art of Biosynthesis therapy involves overcoming the inhibitions in the external circle, starting with the most easily accessible segment, with the aim of reaching the inner circle where the segments are more strongly linked together, and then reaching the centre from there. This results in 7 different areas of work:

1. Affecto-motoric work with muscle tone and movement
2. Energetic work on external and internal breathing rhythms
3. Systemic work on behaviour in relationships
4. Psycho-energetic work on the spectrum of holding and releasing emotions
5. Psycho-dynamic work with speech to eliminate communication problems
6. Transformative work on restrictive ideas and images that limit our visions
7. Transpersonal development by using somatic meditation to link up with the voice of the heart

Viewed horizontally three zones are apparent:

- A lower zone of connection (somatic-energetic links: 1+2)
- A central zone of contact (channels of relationship and emotional expression: 3+4)
- An upper zone of context (verbal and visual forms of experience: 5+6)

If we divide the diagram vertically, we can distinguish between the left-hand segments which are more interpersonal, and the intrapersonal right-hand segments. Of course both sides have a mutual influence over each other, and both surround a transpersonal core self.

If we work with this core self or essence, we are frequently dealing with very subtle energetic experiences. We want to come nearer to the processes and qualities of the essential core. They are the sources of inner strength and nourishment. They are the starting points of physical, psychological and spiritual healing. There are basically three “ways” of reaching them, which should ultimately flow together:
1. The “way of the belly” takes us through a deep emotional cleansing and purification process (transmutation).
2. The “way of the heart” teaches us to express our innermost qualities in our daily life (transformation).
3. The “way of awareness” allows our sense of self-identification to become less rigid and more permeable, so that we can live and experience in a more spontaneous and less restricted way (transcendence).

Since polarity is a central concept in Biosynthesis, what is helpful for one person could damage another. Because of this, the therapist has a whole spectrum of polarities from which to choose an approach, and he or she is guided by the reactions of the client as to which polarity he/she should give priority to at a particular time.

The principal polarities are:
- Internal work versus external work (experience or expression);
- Rising or falling energy levels (e.g. standing or lying, lightness or gravity, light focus or earth focus);
- Active leading versus receptive following;
- Regressive or progressive orientation (immersion into or emergence out of past events);
- Interaction between verbal and non-verbal communication.

Biosynthesis has been researched and developed over the past 40 years by David Boadella; it continues to be developed today in theory and a wide range of practical applications by Silvia Specht Boadella and David Boadella, as well as leading members of the “International Training Faculty of Biosynthesis”.

In many respects Biosynthesis is based on the energetic theories of Wilhelm Reich, and the discoveries made by Francis Mott and Frank Lake about prenatal and perinatal processes. It has also been heavily influenced by Stanley Keleman’s research into the formative process and emotional anatomy.

The scientific concept is based on the discoveries of the quantum physicist David Bohm on soma significance, and of the biologist Rupert Sheldrake on morphogenetic fields.

The spiritual basis of Biosynthesis is oriented on the discoveries and works of Robert Moore with regard to the integration of psyche and soma - in particular his work with essential qualities and his research into the anatomy and circulation of subtle energy. Bio-communication was developed within Biosynthesis from these areas of knowledge.

Biosynthesis is a holistic method and includes a broad spectrum of working approaches. Biosynthesis creates a bridge between natural science and human sciences, by connecting the realms of pre- and perinatal psychology, somatic and depth-psychologically oriented psychotherapy, somatic therapy, and transpersonal psychology.

More information on the International Foundation for Biosynthesis IFB and its work are given on our Website or at the International Institute for Biosynthesis IIBS: Benzenrüti 6, CH-9410 Heiden/Switzerland. E-Mail: info@biosynthesis.org, www.biosynthesis.org

Biography

David Boadella (born 1931), B.A., M.Ed., D.Sc.hon, Psychotherapist SPV, UKCP and ECP. Studied education, literature and psychology. Trained in character-analytic vegetotherapy. Founder of Biosynthesis. He has spent many years in psychotherapeutic practice. He holds lectures worldwide, and is the author of numerous books and articles. He has been publishing the journal “Energy & Character” since 1970. In 1995 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the “Open International University of Complementary Medicine”. A selection of David Boadella’s books: “Befreite Lebensenergie / Lifestreams” (Kösel / Routledge), “Wilhelm Reich: The evolution of his work” (Arkana).

Silvia Specht Boadella (born 1948), Ph.D., Psychotherapist SPV and ECP. Studied philosophy, literature, art history and psychology. Trained in Biosynthesis. Since 1985 she has undergone ongoing further training in “Psychosomatic Centering” (Robert Moore, Denmark). She spent four years lecturing at the University of Kanazawa (Japan). There she dealt intensively with Zen Buddhism and trained in Buto dance with Kazuo Ohno. Since 1985 she has had a psychotherapeutic practice for individual and group therapy. Since 1986 she has been a Biosynthesis trainer at an international level and director of the IIBS. She has published a book: “Erinnerung als Veränderung” (Memory as Change) (Mäander).

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Organ Systems and Lifestyles

David Boadella, D.Sc.hon, M.Ed., B.A.

Abstract

This article was the earliest introduction of the embryological model which is foundational to Biosynthesis. It first appeared in English in 1975. The model has influenced other body-psychotherapy directions, and is now gaining constant new confirmation by advances in neurobiology.

Keywords

Embryological - Neurobiology - Organ systems and lifestyles

INTRODUCTION

This article is the first of several to develop the theme of the relationship between embryonic form, body morphology, character attitudes, and therapeutic styles. These ideas were first presented in talks at the Friends' Meeting House in Hampstead, London, in March and April, 1976, and organized by the growth center, "Community." The articles will form part of my book Lifestreams to be published by Coventure Ltd., in 1977.

GERMINAL LAYERS AND BODY SEGMENTS

The human being, as Reich described him, functioned in some ways like an amoeba, or a jellyfish, governed by a rhythmic alternation of expansion and contraction. In pleasure a person who relaxes is aware of fine sensations of vibrations moving through the body; Reich called these "streaming sensations" or vegetative currents (Reich 1948). They are functionally similar to the outward movement of protoplasm in an amoeba. In a state of anxiety, unpleasurable pulling sensations are felt in the solar plexus region as these currents reverse their direction and move inwards away from some harmful stimulus in the environment. Under prolonged stress the amoeba can encapsulate, forming a semi-impermeable cyst like hardening of its protoplasm, which protects the inner contents. The human being likewise has his armour, a stiffening of the musculature which defends him from hurt.

Alexander Lowen (Lowen, 1958) has described three forms of movement in animal life: firstly, he gives an account of movement from centre to periphery which corresponds largely with Reich's account of amoeboid life. In human living, the relationship of the periphery to the centre of the organism is a crucial one, one which I shall look at more closely later.

Lowen's second direction of movement is a longitudinal one, along the axis of the body, propelling the animal forward in the direction of the head. He describes how the human body is built like a series of tubes. These tubes derive from germinal layers in the embryo.

In the centre of the body is the gastro-intestinal tube formed from the endoderm. Embryologically, the lungs are an out budding from this tube. We can think of the breathing and feeding functions as innermost and most centralized of the body activities. It is by means of these organ systems that he derives the energy to stay alive. In therapy, if we want someone to become more "centred" we ask him to lie down, and to become aware of the rhythms of his breathing and the peristaltic movements of his gut.

The second germ layer of the body is formed from mesoderm. The cardiovascular system and the skeletomuscular systems derive from this layer. It is responsible for the fluid pressure levels in the body and the degree of muscle tension and relaxation. The heart pumps blood round the body to charge it with energy primed for action. The muscles in walking, running, and wherever movements of the body are carried out, discharge these actions, and the rhythmic action of these muscles acts as a "vein pump" to help return the blood to the heart (Olesen, 1971). The stress positions of bio-energetics act initially on this layer, toning up slack muscles, relaxing tense ones, and improving the circulatory flow throughout the body, in a process we call grounding.

The third germ layer of the body is formed from ectoderm. It provides the outer most tube, the skin, and with that the sensory organs, and the whole of the nervous system, centred in the brain. It governs the perceptual system, the flow of information into and out of the body. Therapeutic work that encourages sensory awareness, eye-contact, and the ways we encounter each other, work in the area that I call 'facing'. Facing person can be related to Lowen's third degree of movement, which involves rotation round the axis of the body, and the distinction between the back and the front of the body. Stanley Keleman (Keleman, 1975) has emphasized the leap forward in sensitization and discrimination when we stand erect and meet the world with the whole of the soft underside of the body as our leading edge. The face to face position in making love expresses this increased opportunity to maximise contact.

Although in the completed body form the embryonic layers are arranged in this sequence, they do not develop in this order. Ectoderm and endoderm form as two sides of the embryonic disc, and the ectoderm begins to develop first, with the inrolling of the back, which forms the beginning of the neural canal. We can justifiably
look on the ectodermal systems as the earliest in developmental importance. Mesoderm tissues are formed last in the sequence.

In life inside the womb the system formed out of endoderm - the apparatus for feeding and breathing, lies dormant, for the fetus in the womb is nourished through the umbilicus, and neither feeds nor breathes. Movements certainly take place in the womb, but the specific orientation to gravity, and with that the development of anti-gravitational tensions which are the basis of the erect stance (d. Moshe Feldenkrais: The Body and Mature Behaviour (Feldenkrais, 1948)) cannot take place in the fluid medium of the womb. The fetal movements are virtually weightless. Immersed in the amnion, cushioned by fluids, perfused with what Francis Mott (Mott, 1948) refers to as "umbilical affect", the fetus can feel contained, enclosed, secure, but certainly not grounded in gravity.

But the newborn child has already had months of sensations. Fetal skin sensations, stimulated by movement of the womb fluids on the lanugos hairs, exist for months before he is born. The fetus can see light (sunlight can be perceived as a golden glow shining through the wall of the womb) and sound, can be heard, both the mother's intestinal sounds, and loud noises from the outside world. The actively growing nervous system of the fetus is nourished by dreaming. Recent research shows both that dreaming time is a time when brain protein is replenished; and that the fetus dreams more than the post-natal child.

This threefold division of the organ systems is not simply a feature of embryonic life. It is fundamental to the organization of the brain, as I shall show, and it is likely that it is fundamental to the development of character-structure.

THE THREE DIVISIONS OF THE BRAIN

A few years ago, when I was taking a course for the Open University on the biological basis of behaviour, I was required to digest and organise a large amount of complex information on the processes of the brain and how it functions. It seemed to me that the most fundamental separation of all this data was into a three-fold division: 1. Structures and functions concerned with the deep energy processes of the body, and its metabolic systems; 2. Structures and functions engineered with behaviour, movement and motor expression; and 3. Structures and functions concerned with processing incoming information and the perception of the world.

These three great divisions, vegetative, sensory and motor - had no connection, at the time I did this work, with the three primary germ layers of the embryo; nor do I have a compulsion to arrange things in threes. Certainly I was aware of the relationship between these three brain divisions, perhaps they should be called aspects of mind, and the way Lowen described the somatic basis of ego-psychology. For he related the Id to the vegetative processes of the body; he related the ego to the functions of perception and motor control. Nevertheless, it still came as something of a shock to me to discover that such a division of brain processes were also made by the great Soviet neurologist, Luria, who described them as follows:

There are solid grounds for distinguishing three principal functional units of the brain whose participation is necessary for any type of mental activity. With some approximation to the truth they can be described as: 1. A unit for regulating tone or waking; 2. A unit for obtaining, processing and storing information; and 3. A unit for programming, regulating and verifying mental activity (Luria, 1973).

In his account of these, Luria relates the first unit to processes, which give the brain its charge of energy, amongst which he places first the metabolic processes of the organism. The second unit layers the visual, auditory, and general sensory processes and functions. The third unit is connected particularly with out-going impulses and the motor cortex of the brain.

Of course, Luria points out, these three units do not work independently: "each form of conscious activity is always a complex functional system and takes place through the combined working of all three brain units, each of which makes its own contribution."

This interdependence is equally true of the body, of course: the three germinal layers depend on each other, for sense organs need muscles to move them and food and air supply to nourish them, and so on.

At the level of commonsense, the three fold division applies to the heart also, which pumps blood to the muscle systems for action, to the brain for thought, and to the gut for digestion. We do not do hard physical exercise after a meal for this reason, nor try to carry out difficult mental work and hard physical work at the same time usually.

SEGMENTATION AND THE THREE BASIC POLARITIES OF THE BODY

Wilhelm Reich described the organisation of the body musculature in terms of a series of segments. He
divided the body into seven zones of expressive functioning: an ocular segment including the eyes and the upper part of the head; an oral segment centred on the mouth; a cervical segment covering the throat and neck; a thoracic segment including the chest and arms; a diaphragmatic segment; an abdominal segment; and a pelvic segment, including the base of the spine and the legs.

What relationship can be found between such a segmental view of the form the body, and the embryological viewpoint, based as it is on three germinal layers of tissue and the resulting organ systems, and the three functional systems of energy-metabolism, information gathering, and motility?

For a brilliant and fascinating answer to this question I am indebted to the work of Otto Hartmann, whose book on Dynamic Morphology (Hartmann, 1959) I had the good fortune to discover when I was working on this study of embryonic form and bodily organization.

Hartmann's view of bodily organisation looks on it as an expression of two basic polarities: the first, between the head and the hollow organs of the trunk; the second, between the sensory system, based on the brain, and the locomotor system expressed through the musculature of the limbs. We can look on this as a polarity of the main ectodermal and endodermal organ systems on the one hand; and between the main ectodermal system, and the skeletal-motor system formed from the mesoderm on the other.

Whether a third polarity, between endoderm and mesoderm, has functional importance, is a question that is left open for the time being.

THE TRIPLE ORGANISATION OF THE BODY COMPARTMENTS

The body has three basic compartments, the skull, the thorax, and the abdomen. Hartmann (Hartmann, 1959) shows that the functional systems of skull and abdomen are in many ways antithetic in design and function, whilst the design and functioning of the middle compartment, the thorax, is in some ways intermediate, having some qualities associated with both the lower and upper compartments. The ideas that follow are derived from his work.

The skull is the most closed and contained body compartment. It is enclosed or encapsulated more than the other two compartments, protecting the brain. The abdomen on the other hand has no bony shielding, is covered only by muscle sheets, which enable it to move in and out easily. The belly is recognized to be one of the most vulnerable areas of the body, the soft centre, most open to the world. The rib cage is intermediate in design: like the skull, it encloses and protects the contents of the chest, yet it also moves up and down like the abdomen. It is most shielded at the top where the fixed ribs form the narrowest orbits, and most open at the bottom, where the floating ribs form incomplete orbits.

Paradoxically, the functions are arranged inversely. The skull contains the brain and the principal sensory organs whose function is to take in information about the world at large: the centripetal skull has centrifugal sensory receptors. The abdomen on the other hand, which is most exposed and open, contains the principal organs for the metabolism of the body's energy. The centrifugal belly has centripetal energy collection and storage organs. Breathing is related both to metabolism, and to states of consciousness. Inspiration and expiration are related to the rhythms of waking and sleeping, and these in turn reflect the basic polarity of alertness required for sensory functions of consciousness, and the unconscious metabolic processes, which continue even in sleep. Similarly, of the two circulatory systems - body circulation, and pulmonary circulation, one is linked to the metabolic system through the liver while the other is related to the functions of oxygenation and consciousness through the lungs.

THE POLARITY OF THE HEAD AND THE LIMBS

The limbs express outwards and downwards flowing movements, which reach out to touch and manipulate the world, in situations where motor activity is called for. In situations of deep thought, however, the limbs tend to flex, and the back to round: the whole body, in the statue of Rodin's thinker, begins to take on the closed curves one associates with the centripetal form of the head. Thinking and action are like the charging and discharging strokes of a two-beat rhythm. The concentrating and focussing functions of thought are expressed in the capsule form of the skull; the dispersing, extensor functions of the limbs are expressed in the radiating bone patterns, one upper limb tone, two lower limb bones, then the fanning out into fingers and toes.

THE POLARITY OF THE INNER AND OUTER CYLINDERS

Otto Hartmann deals only with the contrast between the head and the trunk, and between the head and the limbs. For some understanding of the relationship between the central organs of the trunk, and the outer muscles of the trunk, responsible for anti-gravitational tonus, and the co-ordination of the limbs, the clearest picture is given by Kurtz and Prestera in their book *The Body Reveals* (Kurtz, 1976). They make a simple
distinction between two levels of experience and relate these to the body. They distinguish an inner or core layer, involved with beingness, and an outer or extrinsic layer involved with action and doing.

The components of the extrinsic layer are: 1. The broad muscles connecting the pelvis, trunk and arms (latissimus dorsi), 2. The long muscles erecting the spine. (sacro-spinalis), 3. The large muscles of the thighs and arms, 4. The large muscles of the belly wall, 5. The large muscles joining the chest to the arms (pectoralis major), 6. Tissue sheaths surrounding these muscles with associated fat and skin.

The components of the core, or intrinsic layer are: 1. The deep organ systems of the body, including the heart and great blood vessels, 2. The bones and bone marrow, 3. Ligaments condensed around the bones, 4. Intrinsic muscles linking the bones with the spine, 5. The muscles linking the ribs (intercostals), 6. The diaphragm, 7. The large muscle (psoas) which goes from deep inside the body, joining the spine to the lower limbs.

Kurtz and Prestera view these systems as two concentric cylinders:

At birth the inner cylinder or core is present, though underdeveloped. If the environment is appropriate the individual develops a solid core. On the other hand if the individual's emotional or spiritual development is blocked or distorted, the core is experienced as lacking or inadequate.

Seen in structural terms, the core is in the internal supporting pillar. It is important to understand that the outer layer develops in relation to the growth of the core. When the core is formed, the outer layer builds up above the core without strain. When it is weak, the outer layer either does not develop, and we have an undernourished, underdeveloped weak individual, or in various ways the outer layer overdevelops in an attempt to hold the structure up, or together (Kurtz, 1976).

Although these authors are looking at the two cylinders primarily from the viewpoint of the different muscles involved, reflecting the influence of Ida Rolf on their thinking, the concept of inner and outer cylinder is a more basic one. The central tube of the body is the gut; the outermost tube is the skin, with its sensory detectors capable of reaching into space; the intermediate tube is the muscular sheath which Kurtz and Prestera describe under their term extrinsic. Muscles, sense detectors, and metabolic systems are involved with all three body cylinders; nevertheless the central system is primarily a deep organ system derived from endoderm; the intermediate system is primarily a large muscle system geared to extensor movement and locomotion, and derived from mesoderm; the outermost cylinder with its extensive neuro-sensory connections is primarily derived from ectoderm.

ENERGY RESERVOIRS AND TYPES OF ARMOUR

In his book on the physical dynamics of character-structure Alexander Lowen describes the functioning of two energy reservoirs, the pelvis and the brain. "The greater pelvis", he writes, "includes the belly in front, the buttocks, the organs of discharge. The intensity of the genital discharge must depend upon how much energy can be accumulated in the reservoir system prior to release" (Lowen 1958). As examples of severe disturbance in this reservoir system Lowen mentions conditions of chronic ulcerative colitis and chronic spastic colitis: "In this condition the lack of a reservoir in the intestinal channel is immediately apparent".

Gerda Boyesen, (Boyesen, 1974) in her work on psycho-peristalsis, has dealt consistently with the abdominal reservoir. She has described the difference between an open system and a closed system, and shown how the gut can absorb and store nervous tension.

Lowen describes the brain reservoir as follows:

In the upper half of the body, the organ which restrains the impulse is the brain. Before the impulse is fed into the motor nerves which control muscular discharge, it is subjected to the examination and censorship of the sensory and association areas. If perception or memory counsel holding back, no motors discharge occurs. The main energy of the impulse is frozen on the sub cortical level or withdrawn back into the id system. One cannot comprehend the reality principle if one ignores the fact that the brain and in fact the whole head, can contain the most powerful impulses. The brain too, functions like a condenser, equal in capacity to the condenser-like function of the genital apparatus. The actual amount of energy which can be held and focussed in the human brain is tremendous. In very healthy organisms it creates a glow about the head (Lowen 1958).

What does Lowen mean by "the main energy of the impulse is frozen on the sub-cortical level, or withdrawn back into the id system?"
He clearly indicates that the organism has a choice. Let us leave this question unanswered for the moment and consider a third reservoir system, the muscles and tissues. That energy can be stored here, and held (bound) prior to release is clearly described in Reich's account of muscular armour. It is explained in great detail, with attention to osmotic pressure of body fluids in the muscle tissues, in Gerda Boyesen's account of hypertonic and hypotonic processes. And it is also recognised by Lowen who writes, "Muscles can become tense when they are consciously holding back an impulse."

For example, one can become so angry that the muscles ache from holding back the impulse. In this case one feels the tension in the muscles (Lowen, 1958). Lowen also quotes the dramatic case-history that Reich gives, of the man he treated in Copenhagen during 1933-the case in fact from which he first began to grasp the dynamics of the vegetative process in the body. "Reich commented that when the muscles of the neck relaxed, powerful impulses broke through. From a multitude of such facts Reich deduced that emotional energy which could be expressed sexually or as anger or anxiety was bound by chronic muscular tensions" (Lowen, 1958).

It is thus possible to distinguish three types of reservoir: the abdominal-pelvic reservoir, the muscular reservoir, and the brain reservoir. Corresponding to these, if the energy held in the reservoirs undergoes stasis, and is withheld from discharge, we would expect to find three types of armouring.

The first of these to be discovered was the muscular armour. Lowen has described two forms of this - plate-like and mesh-like; but the ability of the body to store large amounts of energy in the muscular system so as to form a rigid armour he restricts to those who fall into the pattern he calls the "rigid characters." He says: "I reserve the use of the word 'armour' only for those "character-structures which include as part of the neurotic mechanism an ability to decrease sensitivity to hurt, This excludes all pre-genital structures (Lowen, 1958).

Pre-genital characters are armoured however, in Reich's use of the term; if they lack the well-developed muscular defences of the rigid characters, what kind of armour do they have? Gerda Boyesen used the term visceral armour to describe the tensions of the gastro-intestinal system which were detectable in every case she called abdominal closure. Many of the details of this kind of armouring are described in the series of papers on psycho-peristalsis.

For the third type of armour, which could be called cerebral armour, I believe there are two types. One form occurs at the sub-cortical level and the other at the cortical level. Severe sub-cortical armouring is described by Reich in his case-history of the schizophrenic split:

Is it possible that the schizophrenic attack or process is locally anchored just as are other disease symptoms such as anorexia or a headache or cardiac anxiety? Is it the base of the brain, the region of the crossing of the optic nerve (Reich, 1948)? Robert Dew, (Dew, 1974) in an article on headaches in the Journal of Orgonomy, suggests that migraine, caused by vaso-dilation of the cerebral blood vessels, may be the body's attempt to overcome such contractions.

By cortical armouring, I understand any process whereby energy is held in a silent thought-process which become a block to communication. We do not know exactly how much energy can be stored or expended in thinking, or the exact dynamics of this. In mental activity requiring intense concentration - game of chess - large amounts of energy are consumed. Spassky, in the world championship against Bobby Fischer a few years ago, lost over a stone in weight. Roughly 20% of the body's oxygen supply goes to nourish the silent processes which, if there is a split between impressions and expressions, may show no outward signs. In therapy, if one works to relax the body without paying attention to this armour process, it is possible to be deceived. Hypotonic muscles are very relaxed. Where is the energy held? The person whose body appears to relax so well has gone 'far away'; he has withdrawn his energy into unexpressed thinking which can be difficult to get at. How after all do you massage the brain? I shall deal with ways of working with cerebral armour in a later section of this article.

THE OCULAR ZONE AND THE LIBIDINAL PHASES

Elsworth Baker, in his book "Man in the Trap" (Baker, 1967), postulated a fourth erogenous zone, the ocular zone, which was as crucial for development psychology as the classical zones of psycho-analysis: the oral, the anal, and the genital. His argument is persuasive, and I used it myself in my paper on "Stress and Character Structure" (Boadella, 1974). There is one problem: the ocular period and the oral period are contemporary in time, they are both said to occur during the first few months of life, yet the ocular zone is held to be even more crucial for later emotional health than the oral zone.

In "Stress and Character" I related two polarised character patterns, the schizoid and the hysterical, to this zone. But something was not right. Could it be the ocular zone has its dominant impact even earlier than the oral period? If so that would place its developmental phase in the period before birth: it would imply character-formation within the womb.

This problem was clarified greatly by the embryological organisation I have already described. For it is clear
that the neuro-sensory system is the one that is most sensitised to states within the womb. Shocks to the eyes, ears, and skin surface of the newborn, such as are described in Leboyer's book "Birth Without Violence" (Leboyer, 1975), merely continue the shocks that a difficult birth deliver to the sensory system of the fetus. Of course these shocks pervade the total organism. But they are delivered through the sensory channels, within the womb primarily the skin, the largest organ of the body.

The importance of the skin and of skin contact is that it is our earliest and most deeply rooted experience of the world. Long before we drink the world in through the gut, or walk on its surface and experience the pull of its gravity on our muscles, it contacts as through its massage of the womb walls, pleasurable and relaxing, or painful and stressing, according to the condition of the mother's body.

Two of the other libidinal phases, oral and anal, described character patterns formed from experiences associated with the two ends of the intestinal canal. The final libidinal phase, the genital period, was precisely the period for which Lowen described the development of a fully fledged muscular armour. It began to look as though there corresponded to the three primary germ layers of the embryo, three basic types of character-patternning: genital, pre-genital, and pre-natal. There seemed to be a connection somewhere between the three types of armouring: muscular armouring typifying the genital character patterns (oral) and (anal); and in some way cerebral armour might be related to uterine character patterns. These were tentative conclusions needing further exploration.

UTERINE FEELINGS, STATES OF BIRTH, AND PRE-NATAL CHARACTER PATTERNS

Stanislav Grof, (Grof, 1975) in his book about pre-natal experience based on memories recovered under LSD, distinguished three types of experience during birth. These were described in Vol. 6 No. 3 Energy & Character in my article on acid trips (Lake, 1966). Grof relates these images of heaven, hell and purgatory.

The experience of 'hell' in the womb is one of cosmic engulfment. Lake relates it to the state of mind that he calls schizoid dread (Lake, 1966). Lowen, in describing the origin of the schizoid personality characteristics, has this to say:

The proposition that the predisposition to the schizoid disturbance has a prenatal origin throws light upon several important elements in this illness:

1. It supports the theory of a constitutional factor without appealing to heredity to justify this hypothesis.

2. It explains the commitment to the womb which is often found at the centre of this disturbance. The term “commitment to the womb” describes the schizoid individual's endeavour to re-establish a parasitic type of relationship in adult life and his reluctance to cut the umbilical cord that ties to his mother. This tendency is more evident in the schizophrenic patient, but it exists to some degree in all schizoid individuals. It indicates a fixation at the pre-natal stage because the needs of the organism at that stage were not fulfilled. It suggests that the difficulties the schizoid person has with such basic functions as sucking and breathing stem from inadequate development in pre-natal life.

3. It provides a firmer base for the view that the schizoid disturbance is, in part, a deficiency disease. The deficiency is the lack of warmth, on the physical level, in the womb, and on the emotional level in post-natal life.

4. This extension of the origin of the schizoid problem to the period of gestation enables one to venture some interpretations of patients' feelings that would not otherwise be logical. For example, the following remark by a patient may refer to this period: 'I'm afraid. They want me to die, but I won't let them. I feel on guard - waiting for something on happen. Something to do with the dark' (Lowen, 1967).

Grof describes the imagery associated with the 'purgatory' experience in these words:

The most important characteristic of this pattern is the atmosphere of titanic fight. Immense condensation and explosive release is experienced... The visions typically accompanying these experiences involve various dynamic geometrical images in rich colors, exploding volcanoes or atom bombs, launched missiles, gigantic fires, dramatic scenes of war destruction, power plants, hydro-electric stations, high voltage electrical conduit and flash discharges, cosmic fireworks, etc. (Grof, 1975).
In my article describing his work, I wrote:

In the explosive disaster images we can recognize the recurrent themes of hysterical nightmares: the threat of being destroyed, basically by fire. The passage through fire can continue for years, as long as the hysterical way of being in the world remains unaltered." The symptoms which Grof recovered under acid are familiar enough from the symptoms of hysteria: "torturing pains in the body, cardiac distress, profuse sweating, alternating chills and hot flushes, nausea, and tension discharged in tremors, twitches, jerks and complex twisting movements (Boadella, 1974).

In "Stress and Character Structure" I have already described the contrasting views of the origins of hysteria given by Lowen and by Lake. The hysteric suffers a double disappointment from the father operating in the oedipal period, and from the mother operating much earlier. Lowen, following Freud and Reich has concentrated on the body dynamics of the rigid, genital form from of hysteria. Lake on the other hand had concentrated on the pre-genital core of hysteria, which he shows to be the polar opposite of the schizoid reaction pattern.

If the schizoid dynamics are crucially related to birth experience, or uterine conditions, could it be that hysteria was similarly determined? Lake did not seem to have arrived at this conclusion at the time he wrote his principal book. Yet the word itself provides a clue to its meaning. Francis Mott provides one of the most brilliant elucidations of this that I have come across:

That ancient peoples know something of this condition is enshrined in the very etymology of the word hysteria. This word derives from the Greek word ‘hustera’, which means a womb. (Uterus derives from the same root). The condition known as hysteria was indeed for many centuries regarded as an obscure defect of the womb, and even as a slipping or ‘wandering’ of the uterus. Thus it was thought of as a disease peculiar to women - a view which still obtained in the medical profession as late as a generation ago. It is recorded by Freud’s disciple Brill, that when Freud spoke of hysteria in a man he was rebuked by a Viennese physician with the words: ‘hysteria really means uterus; how then can a man become hysterical?"

It is not the hysteric’s own uterus that is infected, wandering, or slipping. It is the configurational affect of the mother’s womb which has wandered into the hysteric’s body and has infected his respiratory, nutritional, excretive and genital rhythms… we may now understand even more clearly the power and simple truth of the Lilith myth. Truly she haunts the wombs of pregnant women and kidnaps the newborn child, for it is her terrible power which invests the mother’s womb its frightening dragon like quality for the child, and which ‘wanders’ as a womb feeling into the tubes of the body and inspires them with a terrible will to grip and crush nuclear power (Mott, 1948).

Whereas many schizoid symptoms seem to show a need to regress to the womb, to be insulated within a capsule, and to return to a pre-terrestrial dream-life, the hysteric is in flight from the womb. "Every child is seeking to escape from the mother and the womb is part of its life achievement", writes Mott, but for the person with marked hysterical features, the compulsion to be born, to escape the mother, is a desperate one. In the fugue states, amnesias, twilight states, and dissociations of classical hysteria we see some of the by-products of cerebral armouring, different from the head-pressure suffered by the schizoid person (17) in this respect; that the schizoid person has learned to live with sometimes inescapable head pressure; the hysteric on the other hand is in flight from it, constantly finding ways of volcanically dissolving head-tension by siphoning it off into bodily aches.

"These body signs", Lake writes, "are not caused by organic deficits or disorders as ordinary disease are. They are not primarily medical signs even though an arm, long disused on account of an hysterical paralysis, will eventually show muscular atrophy. The body signs in hysteria are similar to the ‘real’, ‘germine’ organic diseases, but not so similar as to deceive a neurologist. They are the patient's idea of the disease which he has elaborated, by processes which are largely unconscious… They are an image or reproduction, a picture or icon of the ‘real thing’...

"This is a wordless language of illness, directed from a sufferer who cannot diagnose his own malady because the ‘thing itself’ is an inexpressible experience, reverberating from its place in the wordless phase of life within the womb of the spirit" (Lake, 1966).

The hysteric form of cerebral armouring in thus based on exclusion: he locks out thought, the process of planning, meditation, and internalisation, The hysteric is really saying: ‘attend to my body, which is suffering, but
wherever you do, don't touch my head". If the schizoid person is locked in his head, the hysterics locked out of his head; but in both cases the process of the head-dynamic is central.

In discussion with Frank Lake he pointed out that the ectoderm is of two primary types: cerebral ectoderm and cutaneous ectoderm. The schizoid person with his emphasis on thoughts tends to identify with the cerebral ectoderm; while the hysterics, person in whom touch-hunger is high, tends to identify more with cutaneous ectoderm: "touch my skin and prove that I'm alive."

Lake has made use of Pavlov's concept of trans-marginal stress to suggest that the distinction between schizoid and hysteric reactions depends on the intensity of the stress stimulus, which up to a certain point produces reactions in one direction, and beyond that point leads in the opposite direction. In "Stress and Character Structure" I used the analogy of panic-towards-warmth and adaptation-to-cold as everyday examples of this polarity.

Lake also uses the term "negative functional shift" for the move from the active, struggling response to stress, towards the resigned and withdrawn response to even greater stress. If the stress we are concerned with at the moment is birth-stress, then hell is worse than purgatory, and the 'intolerable experience of no-exit', which Grof describes, is a more dreadful state to bear than the 'titanic struggle' of fighting one's way out of the womb.

This is how Lake describes the function shift:

Our basic attitude to life, whether affirming it and struggling to live, or rejecting it as too painful and retreating towards a longed-for death, is communicated to all important co-ordinating centre in the brain known as the hypothalamus. This is also the centre which controls many alterable functions of the body, preparing the whole psychophysical organism, by means of various functional shifts, to facilitate this basic attitude or intention, whatever it is.

Normal hypothalamic responses prepare the body to carry out the purposes of an organism healthily orientated to the rhythms of life. ... And so if life is threatened the preparations for a fight to defend it. In depression this mobilisation for self-preservation can become unconscious, chronic and damaging but it was meant: to assert life. Of quite another order is the negative functional shift, which occurs, or something very like it, in rodents hibernating when the intolerable hardships of winter make all ordinary life impossible, and in certain severe depressions in man... My hypothesis is that we are justified in linking the negative or life-negating hypothalamic functioning with the death-wishes of the schizoid position." (16.174) In this view the struggle to live is transformed, beyond a crucial threshold, into the struggle to die.

It seems we are dealing with basic patterns of excitability in the nervous system. In my series of papers on coma and convulsion (Boadella, 1975) I illustrated how many of the modalities of therapy, the growth movement, and certain meditation systems, were characterised by basic patterns of handling nervous energy. In the introduction to this series I postulate metabolic states: tension with charge, relaxation with discharge, relaxation with charge, and tension with discharge. The first two states describe the natural pulsations of an alive organism. In the pleasurable and expansive orgastic movements of a healthy birth these states predominate. I had not, at the time of writing that series, made the link with birth however. It now seems likely that these two patterns of excitability were related to the birth states. The tensive-convulsing process was the Titanic struggle of birth translated into post-natal life, with the determination to fight one's way out of every comer, or flee in panic from situations of stasis and confinement while the resigned, unnaturally calm, highly charged and imploded states, which I summed up under the term 'coma,' related to the negative functional shift of the schizoid position. Stanley Keleman (Keleman 1975) also recognised these two patterns of excitability in people's styles of dying. Otto Hartmann similarly writes about centrifugal and centripetal character reactions (Kurts, 1976).*

UMBILICAL CASTRATION AND THE THIRD STAGE OF LABOUR

The third stage of labour is the time when the baby, already delivered from the womb is separated from the placenta, and the placenta from the mother. It is a time of arrival, during which the baby undergoes a number of crucial transitions. Leboyer, the French doctor who wrote on 'Birth Without Violence' has described how important it is for the child's future well-being that his first introduction to the world, and its impact on his bodily functions, should be handled sensitively. Specifically he describes how a baby can experience pleasure or pain in the way his bodily systems adjust to the new types of functioning required by life outside the womb. We can distinguish:

1. A sensory transition. The newborn baby comes into a world which is normally at least thirty degrees cooler than life in the womb. Le Boyer has concentrated on the pleasure or trauma associated with skin sensations, the contact of the eye with light and the contact of the ear with sound.

* See also James Quen’s article on power and withdrawal. (Quen, 1976)
2. (a) A circulatory respiratory transition. At birth the circulatory system reroutes itself, as the channels to the lungs open, the flow of blood to the placenta closes off, and the hole in the heart (present throughout uterine life) is shut down.

2. (b) An alimentary transition. This is discussed at length shortly.

3. A gravitational transition. This is discussed in a later article in this series. Specifically, the child moves: from a world dominated by skin sensations to a world where an increasing amount of impressions come from distance-receptors mainly the eyes and ears; from a world where air and food come through the nose and mouth instead of through the navel; from a world where the muscles are weightless and suspended in liquid to a world where they have an anti-gravity function. The relationship between these transitions and the embryonic layers is obvious and rich with meaning for later character-development.

THE GUTS AS CHARACTER

The post-natal systems for obtaining air and food are closely linked. It is possible to swallow air into the stomach and breathe food into the lungs. Many infants frequently do, resulting in vomiting or wind. The close association of the gut and breathing is found also at the embryonic level, since the organ systems of both have a common origin in the endoderm.

In popular speech we say that a person with guts has character, thus recognizing the crucial importance of this organ-system in shaping personality. Freud, in distinguishing oral and anal character types, began the work of understanding how character-attitudes reflect experiences in this period when the infant is closely dependent upon another person for activities at both ends of the gut. Reich and Lowen have greatly extended these insights, by describing some of the characteristics of the bodily tensions and defences developed by people with grave stress over these functions.

Gerda Boyesen's work on psycho-peristalsis has developed a whole biological psychology out of the relationships of tension and relaxation in the intestine, and the vegetative flow of energy between the visceral system and the muscular system. Energy can be bound in the twenty-five foot convolutions of the body's central tube and the associated nerve plexi, and the flow of tissue fluids is affected by impulses from the autonomic nerves of the abdominal plexi. She refers to two states of an open and dosed system in the abdomen. In states of severely disturbed peristalsis, conditions like gastric ulcer, colitis, globus hysterricus and other troubles with intestinal tract symptoms will be found.

Whilst any form of stress may be reflected in the gut, tension in late, periods of life can at least in part be absorbed, stored and discharged through the locomotor system. But in this early period the gut is particularly vulnerable because it is being educated by the parents into opening and closing at socially approved times. A child is taught when and when not to suck in and spit out, to pee and to shit. The result is that patterns of opening and closing, both as sphincter tensions, and as character attitudes to life, are learned very early.

In my article on "Stress and Character Structure" (Boadella, 1974) I suggested that in the oral period there were two polarized character experiences: the experience of emptiness and deprivation that Lowen has associated with the 'empty sack' body-attitude of the oral personality; and the experience of having been in some way poisoned at the sources of nourishment, which Lake has shown to be basic to the destruction of the sense of well-being in the paranoid person. Similarly in the anal period, Lowen has stressed the hole of humiliation and shaming of the formation of the masochistic character.

The classification of character-patterns is still a controversial subject, both in psycho-analysis, and within the Reichian and bio-energetic tradition. Baker, (Baker, 1967), Raphael, (Raphael, 1970) and Lowen (Lowen, 1958) all provide clear-cut characterological descriptions, but there is a lack of agreement between their accounts, as well as some overlap, in spite of the fact that they all studied with Reich. I have already tried to relate Lowen's hierarchical classification of character to Lake 's existential way of looking at the way people's experience shapes their personality. (Boadella, 1974)

How for instance does one look at the difference between the masochistic character, clearly linked to bad experiences over anal functioning in many cases, and the classic anal-compulsive character?

Lowen describes a patient "whose behaviour recapitulated his early toilet experiences. On the one hand his function, anal and otherwise, was blocked by an intense subconscious obstinacy, on the other hand the exigencies of life required that he produce something, in work as well as anally. He had to move (bowel movements included) regardless of his holding back" (Lowen, 1958).

Lowen describes how he thought at first that people with such features were anal characters, but, he points out,
They had none of the traits associated with Freud's description of the anal character: orderliness, parsimony or obstinacy ... Then I thought that this was really intestinal or rectal functioning...The lack of a 'backbone feeling' makes these individuals contract the gut to give them a sense of support. Of course it cannot and does nor stand up and collapse is inevitable (Lowen 1958).

The classic anal compulsive character on the other hand, has developed a backbone. Lowen classifies him with the rigid characters.

The masochist is a classic expression of problems created in the period of gastro-intestinal dependency. Lowen writes:

The tensions in the masochist centre about the two openings of the intestinal tract in his throat there is the conflict created by the fear that food will be forced in or that he may throw up. In the anus and rectum there is the fear that he will move his bowels or that something may be pushed in. The shoulders are held tight to guard the throat; the buttocks and thighs are tense to guard the anus. Behind both tensions lie impulses to evacuate the contents of the alimentary tract (Lowen 1958).

The patterns of excitability, learned in the nervous system during the uterine stage, show up two tendencies, assertion and resignation. In the uterine character patterns the schizoid experience is one of resignation through paralysis and retreating from the body into the head, while the hysterical trend is assertion through struggle and flight. This basic polarity recurs at both ends of the gastro-intestinal tract. The classic oral-deprived person gives up at the mouth, becomes closed off, is afraid to reach, and unable to suck satisfyingly, learns to 'suck' characterologically. The paranoid reaction pattern is much more assertive, spits out unwanted contents, and moves with more rigidity to defend itself against being orally controlled.

Similarly, the child who learns to hold in his body contents, or to squeeze them out under pressure, in response to over-concern from his parents, may accept the humiliating role, or may rebel against it. The basic polarity between masochistic and psychopathic reactions I have already described earlier (Boadella, 1974).

The assertive patterns discussed so far (hysteria, paranoia, psychopathy) disguise their lacks with the patterns they are reactive against, because they are desperate attempts to get away from the stress associated with a particular life-period or organ system. Thus, the hysteric is in flight from the womb and rushes prematurely towards sexual acting out (genitality functioning as a defence against contact). The paranoid person pushes away from the position of oral weakness into an over-blown strength. The psychopath treats other people in the same way that the masochist treats the content of his own gut; squeezing, pushing and manipulating. All the assertive patterns show moves in the direction of acquiring some of the rigidity, which is shown in most developed form in the classical armoured characters (compulsive-dominant, and compulsive-compliant).

A close association between intestinal rhythms and breathing rhythms might be expected in view of their embryonic origin, and the fact that starting to breath and learning to suck are closely related. So, it is to look in a fresh way at styles of breathing.

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Biography
David Boadella (born 1931), B.A., M.Ed., D.Sc.hon, Psychotherapist SPV, UKCP and ECP. Studied education, literature and psychology. Trained in character-analytic vegetotherapy. Founder of Biosynthesis. He has spent many years in psychotherapeutic practice. He holds lectures worldwide, and is the author of numerous books and articles. He has been publishing the journal “Energy & Character” since 1970. In 1995 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the “Open International University of Complementary Medicine”. A selection of David Boadella’s books: “Befreite Lebensenergie / Lifestreams” (Kösel / Routledge), “Wilhelm Reich: The evolution of his work” (Arkana).

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Shape Postures and Postures of the Soul  
The Biosynthesis Concept of Motoric Fields  
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Abstract
This article is an exposition of the Biosynthesis concept of “motoric fields” (the word was first used by Rupert Sheldrake). The use of movement tendencies is central to Biosynthesis, particularly in the work with trauma. Movement is expression through the mesoderm. It underlies all our action patterns and external behaviour. Even eye contact and speech are forms of movement. In trauma the appropriate forms of action to deal with the threat are inhibited, or not possible. They remain frozen into the body as dormant tendencies, waiting to be re- evoked by the relevant therapeutic context.

Keywords
Motoric fields - Neurobiology - Shape postures and postures of the soul

The outer shape of a person reflects his inner mood. Changing that shape can change his mood. This is the simplest insight that lies at the heart of somatic psychology: it was first formulated by Charles Darwin over a hundred years ago.

Some somatic therapies such as Rolfing try to change the body by stretching it into a new shape. The therapist works from outside resculpting the anatomy in line with his vision of the ideal body aligned with gravity in a state of minimal unbalance. Gymnastics and body-building courses offer series of exercises by means of which a person may seek to bully his body into a shape which better expressed his idea of how he wants to be. In classical ballet the dancer may learn to stress his body into shapes required by the choreographer: his movement flow is restricted to the requirements of the dance script. Some patterns of work or sport deform the body when carried on over a period of years: the frozen tennis elbow and housemaids knee, the cramp in a writers fingers, or the bowed down shape of a rice farmer, the body bent double and unable to straighten up, as seen in rural Japan.

Stanley Keleman showed us how our emotional anatomy is formed in response to the different insults to form which we may experience in the conditioning we receive from the scripts of character formation: stand up straight, be a man, put your best foot forwards, don't cry, or its no use, give in, helplessness brings sympathy, if you are weak at the knees no one will knock you down.

The outer scripts of work-schedules and exercise programmes, and the inner scripts of character-formation, have in common hat they demand certain shapes from our bodies. The demand originates from outside even if it is deep inside our unconscious where it may exert its effects.

In contrast to these outer-directed movements and postures there is a quite different relation to shape created when movement flows from inner desire. Such movements are associated with spontaneity, play, improvisation, creativity, unchoreographed dance, or the gracefulness of a sportsman or athlete who is perfectly in tune both with his body, and the outer challenge. It is present in the rhythms of pleasurable work, where compulsion of the dullness of routinised labour have not forced the body into restrictive shapes.

Two nervous impulses pattern our movements: the first of these originates in the brain cortex and travels down what is known as the alpha nerve to give direct signals to the voluntary muscles to act. We can speak of the alpha system as the action system. The second nervous impulse originate in the brain stem and travels down what is known as the gamma nerve: through the muscle spindle it gives signals to the muscle to get into appropriate tonus: we can call this second system the readiness system.

The readiness system, mediated through the gamma nerves, is closely related to mood, and to intention. Without committing ourselves to voluntary action, by our postural attitude we can communicate our inner attitude to and feeling about a situation. Ethologists study the intention movements of animals as a way of learning about their inner attitudes. A dog pricking up its ears has become interested in a new sound. A cat crouching nearer the ground is tensed for a spring to catch a mouse. We hear an unexpected sound in the night and we tense up ready to leap out of bed.

We can separate the movement attitude from the movement tendency. In the movement attitude we see a certain immobile shape which reflects an inhibited movement. Shoulders held high, have not been allowed to droop. The retracted pelvis is held back unable to swing. The head cocked on one side may forever avert a blow.

In the movement tendency on the other hand we can see the beginning of an action pattern. The shoulders suggest the hint of a shrug, the pelvis starts to flirt, the head shifts forward as a speaker prepares to open his mouth and announce his presence in a group of people.

The conditioned movements overlay the unconditioned movements, just as the conscious mind overlays the unconscious mind. Working with movement impulses and eliciting spontaneous changes of shape is thus a way of contacting the unconscious without words as a primary tool. This method is well understood in dance therapy, where communication takes place primarily muscle to muscle, and through this medium, from mind to mind.

In Biosynthesis the therapist is interested both to follow and support spontaneous movements: and to induce and elicit them by leading a part of the body in a certain direction, where it is invited, not required, to follow.
The focus in the womb increasingly moves into a flexion field of the whole body in the last stages of pregnancy. As I described in *Lifestreams* the fetal position recoils in states of regression and represents a wish to retreat from the world into a more womb-like state of security. Many adults use this as a preferred position during sleep.

The flexion fields in the legs can represent a protective defence for the abdomen. The yoga posture in which a person crouches low on flexed legs with the head on the ground is called the posture of the child. The flexion field of the hand is well known in the grasp reflex of the infant, which is strong enough to support the entire weight of the child after birth. The flexion field of the arms is a self-nourishing position where the child cuddles himself or a beloved toy, at times of loneliness or insecurity.

In emotional expression a person may flex in a huddled up position in times of cold, or when he needs to collect his energies rather than to expend them. Stanley Keleman calls this the position of "self-collecting". It can also have a self-preservation and self-protective function, as in the falling position in Judo.

In strong fear the legs may be flexed to the chest, the arms pulled in across the chest, and the belly wall pulled tightly towards the back of the spine. I call this the fetal fear reflex, as its earliest occurrence seems to the

**MOTORIC FIELDS**

The German embryologist Erich Blechschmidt developed the concept of embryo-dynamic fields to describe the different force fields that act on embryonic tissue when the body is forming during morphogenesis. Blechschmidt described eight such fields of force, which he illustrates using the pictorial metaphor of little pin men, pushing, pulling, and twisting the tissues into shape.

These pin men illustrations bring to mind the dance of interaction between helper and helped in a biosynthesis session, and we have evolved Blechschmidt's concept into a descriptive schema for representing many of the major movement sequences that are important both developmentally and formatively in the life of each of us.

By developmentally I mean that the main motoric fields, alone or in combination, are involved in every developmental step, from free-floating in the womb, through birth and suckling, to crawling, standing, grasping and all later skills.

In the work of George Downing, in infant research at the Salpetriere Hospital in Paris, what I call motoric fields are called by him "affecto-motoric schemas". They are biologically given patterns of responsiveness which are activated in the process of a well-attuned upbringing. If the environmental conditions are too restrictive, the patterns can be deformed in a process of adaptation, but the original affecto-motoric schemas remain dormant, as it were hibernating, until appropriate conditions occur at a later time in life.

By formatively, I mean that the same motoric fields are needed to rebalance our muscle tone whenever we are emotionally stressed. The body has deep inner wisdom in knowing how to unwind its tensions. In functional osteopathy "unwinding" is the term given to a technical procedure in which the osteopath tries to follow the natural movement tendency of a person when he suspends his will to move from the alpha system, and listens to the inner voice of the muscle in the gamma system. Moshe Feldenkrais, who was strongly influenced by the English movement teacher, Mathias Alexander, called his method "functional integration". Although he worked primarily without accessing deeply buried emotions, for reasons discussed below, some of the ways a Feldenkrais practitioner induces movement have a resemblance to the way a therapist works in biosynthesis. Feldenkrais strongly influenced Stanley Keleman, to whom the first book on Biosynthesis, *Lifestreams* is dedicated because of what he taught about subtlety in reading and responding to slight gestures and impulses from the readiness system in the muscle.

Eight of the motoric fields are paired in four sets of two. The ninth motoric field is unpaired for reasons that will be made clear later. In describing each field I will try to give an idea of its importance and kinaesthetic development, its relationship to emotional expression, its overemphasis or under-emphasis in certain kinds of character conditioning, and the effectiveness of working with it in therapy.

**The Flexion Field**

The focus in the womb increasingly moves into a flexion field of the whole body in the last stages of pregnancy. As I described in *Lifestreams* the fetal position recoils in states of regression and represents a wish to retreat from the world into a more womb like state of security. Many adults use this as a preferred position during sleep.

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flexion of the fetus a way from negative messages traveling down the umbilical cord. The origin and content of this
umbilical fear are dealt with in *Lifestreams*.

The flexion of the head onto the chest is on the one hand, the position of Rodin's thinker, on the other hand
it is often found in people in states of hopelessness or depression.

When a person is characterologically identified with depression or hopelessness or with strong fear or
anxieties, this motoric field occurs frequently. On the other hand when a person is denying fear or is braced
against collapse, or refusing to show need it can be predominantly avoided.

In the first case the use of the field by the therapist will intensify the character tendency, and therefore can help
to make it conscious. It can also relieve the person of the effort in his own flexor tendency if the therapist "takes it
over" for him.

In the second case the flexion field will be counter to the character tendency. It will frequently be the denied
need which underlies the expressed attitude in the posture. Inducing the flexor attitude can be a way to elicit the
hidden fear or collapse

How does a therapist work to induce the flexion field? It can be used lying on the back or side, sitting, or
kneeling, or standing. When lying the legs are slowly and gently invited into a more bent position. In standing they
are encouraged to yield more at the knees, inviting a tendency to sink towards the floor. The head can be helped
to move towards the breastbone, the arms to pass over the chest in an easy relaxed movement. This is helpful
primarily for people who deny fear, to give up their denial and to get to know what is avoided.

A well functioning man who was a successful research scientist came to therapy with problems of rigidity
and a tendency to overwork. There was also some tension in his personal relationship due to his anxiety to be too
much under the influence of a woman. He had excessive extensor tonus in the back and arms. While lying on his
back with the arms flexed and lightly held at the wrists by the therapist, he got in touch with deep fear contractions
which he later connected to terrors associated with the risk of being bombed during the war, during the time his
mother was pregnant with him. Working through the motoric patterns both, of the fear response, and of his super-
posed denial of it, changed his unconscious anxiety to be overwhelmed by the feelings of a woman, allowed his
back to soften, and for him to greatly improve his love relationship, as well as to find a more pleasurable and
uncompulsive job.

The Extension Field

In extension the body moves into the opposite of flexion. The spine arches backwards, the legs elongate,
the arms widen, and more away from the body, the head lifts away from the chest.

After nine months in the womb birth itself is the first great extension. Some doctors or nurses had the prac-
tice of holding the new born by the heels, hanging downwards, a severe extension field imposed by the birth-
attendant.

The earliest walking movements occur before the child is strong enough to sand, the legs simply stretch out
to their full length, practising the movements that will be later used in locomotion. Kicking is one form of extension.
The child moves with its arms into space to explore what kind of world lies outside the womb.

Therapists working with clients who are under strong emotional pressure, but who resist giving in for
example to an expression of rage, may extend the spine so much it forms a position that is known clinically as
"opisthotonus". The pre-Freudians, in the days of Charcot, called it "arc de cercle", and noticed its occurrence in
hysterical acting out. The body is supported only on the head and the heels. It is an extreme form of bracing back,
but it also repeats the extensor arch of birth. Significantly the breath may also be held.

If the breath is freed and the body allowed to move in this position, it becomes a powerful way to express
extremely powerful feelings of rage or distress. Alexander Lowen developed the use of strong extension over his
bioenergetic chair, but we are talking here of the natural arching of the spine as a way of expressing its mobility
and elasticity.

We can distinguish three different expressions of the motor fields of the arms: one I call stretching: this in-
volves a strong extension into space, with a sense of freedom and power.

The movements of yawning have some of these qualities, and yawning is a very good example of the
extension field, in which the body experiences stretch reflexes that deepen breathing.

The second extension is found in reaching: here a person reaches the arms out for human contact to be
held or to embrace. The emotional feeling relates to giving and taking, and is totally different from the felt sense of
stretching.

We can recognise a third form of extension in the arms which I call opening. It is a delicate and sensitive
exploration of the space beyond the heart, in which a person comes into contact with fine streamings in the arms
and fingers, and becomes aware of the energy field (the so called aura) extending beyond the body.

To induce the extension field the therapist may put his hand in the lumbar curve or the curve of the neck, or
support the undersides of the arms in moving out and away from the body, or encourage widening and
lengthening impulses that are the natural stretch responses to move out of any attitudes of chronic flexion that
may be present.
A woman dealing with very early fear and rage from the first year of life had developed a character expression which she and others recognised as like a madonna: quiet, gentle, understanding, and rational. But she experienced some difficulty in feeling at home in her body, with the powerful feelings repressed since early infancy. In one particular therapeutic session, she began to stretch out very strong into a forward direction, but with this came a powerful destructive feeling against her mother. The rage impulses were also very frightening to her, and there was a strong movement of flexion in the spine to try to pull these back and deny them. I knew she was ready to face and re-own the power of her early rage, which was a key to regaining the full vitality and feeling more grounded in her own body. So I supported her back into the extension and the full power of her rage could come forward. Needless to say this was a safe and ego-integrated expression, which occurred when ripe, and in the context of ongoing therapeutic development, and had nothing to do with acting out.

The Traction Field

The traction field is found primarily in the arms. The grasp reflex evolves into traction when the child learns to lift objects against gravity, and to pull himself up to standing by gripping a chair, or a table. Also in holding onto a treasured object which someone wishes to take away. The game of tug of war is pure traction field.

We can distinguish the passive and active traction field. In the passive form the person grips with the arms against the pull from the other. He is elongated by the other's pull. Traction then combines with extension. Or he actively pulls the other towards him against resistance: then traction combines with flexion.

The emotional feeling of active traction is: I want you, give it to me. Clinging, holding tight, and hanging onto what is ones own are key themes. For a person who is grasping and manipulative in his basic orientation to the world, the traction field is in character. But for a person whose need to hold on are underdeveloped or denied, it is important to develop contact with the need to pull.

When the traction field is used therapeutically it has a number of effects: it is particularly important in situations of helplessness and collapse, where a person has last contact with the power of his or her back as an axis of support for the satisfaction of basic needs. Sometimes it can be used standing between two people linking their hands and leaning backwards. The person to be helped is asked to walk backwards slow pulling their resistant partner forwards. It is a tug of war in which the helper yields and gives up ground gradually.

I used this traction form with a collapsed woman who had given up her rights in a couple relationship, and was tending to resignation and depression. The pulling experience began as a rather mechanical exercise proposed by me, but then developed to a climax of engagement, when she contacted the buried power of her right to self assertion.

This galvanised her out of depression. The change from the mechanical exercise to the dynamic expression corresponded to the mobilisation of the gamma-tone in the muscles for pulling.

For others the experience of the traction field in the arms when lying reactivates feelings of longing and allows the motoric satisfaction of holding on and being held. A man in a therapy group once defined longing as “sadness without arms”.

The Opposition Field

The opposition field is the opposite of the traction field. Where the latter is expressed in pulling, the former is developed in pushing.

The earliest opposition field is associated with the head of the fetus as it pushes against the pelvic floor, bouncing on it according to Sheila Kitzinger, as if on a trampoline.

When the extension movements of the legs contact the resistant surface of the ground, the baby pushes against gravity in order to stand. Before than, lying prone on his belly, his hands push the floor away so as to support the head as the infant surveys the world in the position before crawling begins.

The opposition field, as its name suggests, has to do with the right to say no, and to make boundaries. It implies the right to defend one's personal space and to hold off intruders or invaders.

For the angry psychopathic kind of person who fears manipulation at every turn, this quality of pushing away what is not wanted is highly developed. Every touch may seem an invasion which needs to be pushed abruptly away. For such a person the opposition field will be in character, and other fields will be more helpful in therapeutic work. But for people who learned to give up their boundaries and surrender to invasion without protest, the opposition field is essential I to practice and develop. This includes people easily flooded by anxiety, as well as people who were smothered by over protective mothers as children.

There are many ways of developing this field. Standing back to back and leaning against the supporting partner, then walking slowly against the resistance at first backwards, and then forwards, develops the opposition field in the back. Standing face to face with outstretched arms, palm to palm with one's partner, clearly demarcates the boundary between the two personal spaces. The field can also be used very effectively while lying on one's back with one's feet resting against the thighs of the helper.
In acute anxiety a person can be helped by sitting with their legs flexed and their back to the helper, whose hands are also available to press outwards against. This simultaneously mobilises the boundaries in back, arms and legs, and can bring a person out of overwhelming anxiety very quickly and reliably. The Opposition field provides strong containment also for people whose assertion needs to experience limits.

It is important that the resistant force from the therapist or partner is neither too weak nor too strong. If too strong the opposing force begins to invade and becomes intrusive, and the protection to the boundary is lost. If too weak, then the sense of containment and limit is no longer there. A person's experience is then: the world is not strong enough to handle the power of my feelings.

Because what we call earth contact is very strong in this field it is particularly helpful in working with prepsychotic or borderline people whose boundaries are fragile and need strengthening. Particular patterns of coordination with the breathing are necessary and these will be described later under the ninth motor field.

The Rotation Field

The child rotates normally during birth. Special muscles called "rotators" lie along the length of the spine. The action of walking with its alternate swinging from left to right is a kind of rotatory pulsation, as Stanley Keleman has emphasised.

The legs are equipped with muscles for inversion and eversion, the arms with pronators and supinators, in both cases for inward and outward rotation.

Rotatory movements explore the spaces to the sides of the main body-axis. Children enjoy spinning and turning. The bullfighter demonstrates the skill of rotation in avoiding the bull. The aikido practitioner makes the flow of spiral rotatory movement the centre point of his art.

Rotation can be used to explore unknown pathways, peripheral to the main path, as in the lateral thinking of Edward Bono. These side paths are helpful when we encourage compulsive linear people to turn aside for a while from their well-beaten forward moving tracks. But for people with hysterical tendencies, turning aside is a key feature of the character: the rotation field serves the defence, in squirming, scattering, and rolling aside or twisting away from direct confrontations.

When the therapist is using the rotation field, for those for whom it is suited, he will pick up "impulses to unilateral movement, and encourage asymmetry, helping a person to develop flexibility in turning and rolling. This can be very helpful in loosening the tightness in the lower spine for those with rigid backs, or he can take an arm and gently stretch it across the body in a slow pull that exerts a subtle torsion on the body: this is an active induction by the therapist of passive rotation in the client.

A woman had been afraid of strong movements: most of her life because of rheumatic fever in childhood, was encouraged, while standing, to gently rock in a slight movement from side to side. Gradually her arms spun out from the body and she developed a joyful crescendo of power as she span from side to side. She was learning the freedom of spiral wave-forms that the arms describe when the body oscillate freely around its axis.

A second woman who had rotated the arms inwards was struggling to release tension in the upper body. Only when she was helped to rotate her arms outwards 50 her palms faced forward, was she able to let go of her tendency to hold back, and to give in to the energetic life in her upper body.

The Canalisation Field

Whereas the rotation field turns aside from the centre line of the body, or of a limb, the canalisation field is highly linear and focussed. Actions flow out of the centre of the body directly like spokes from a 'wheel' The child learns to direct his movements: to look straight at you, to point towards a desirable toy or piece of food, The canalisation field is related to purpose, its emotional quality is determined, and serious, committed and goal-oriented.

For over-purposeful people with obsessional tendencies, and a tunnel vision, this is a preferred field that keeps them in character. They are better helped by rotation or pulsation. But for people with low focus, underbounded and easily scattered, who find it hard to direct attention, and commit themselves to an action or a decision, the canalisation field can be extremely helpful.

The therapist encourages the client to explore directed movements that are incisive and highly focussed. It may be as subtle as asking for direct eye contact, instead of an averted gaze, or as total as the commitment packed behind a karate blow.

A man who was impulsively angry and who had twice reacted with psychotic episodes in "primal groups" was helped to develop his voluntary control by first visualising and then enacting three blows to a mattress with his fist. He was given extreme containment in the form of imagined movement proposed, first the containment implied in canalisation field itself, secondly the containment in the form of imagined movement voluntarily executed and thirdly in the containment of three, and not more than three blows. In this way the man's inability to bound himself was reversed, and he became capable of managing himself in the group with-out further psychotic reactions that had troubled him in the past.
The Activation Field

Locomotion is travelling. It usually involves active movements of the arms and legs as in walking, swimming, running and jumping. Activation prepares the person to move somewhere with relative rapidity. The fetus practises swimming movements already in the womb, and can swim before he or she can crawl or stand. Once the infant has mastered the art of crawling, he becomes intensely active. Before that he rehearses activity patterns in the rapid kicking of legs, and beating of arms. In the activation field, the vitalisation is the key theme, not the particular plane or direction of movement. Some people live intensely overactive: rest is torture for them. For such people the activation field is in character: they are always on the go, and don't know when to stop.

People with more depressive tendencies sit around inertly for hours, and cannot get started. Their metabolism is slowed down, speed is an alien attribute. For these people mobilising the activation field may be the key to loosening the grip of a depression. Running and dancing or jumping, are not easily compatible with a depressive frame of mind. But how to help a person with slowed down metabolism to go faster? One way is to ask him to make, as if in demonstration, any brief quick movement, or to give a surprising gesture, of to carry out a sudden action. Another way is to ask for a slow activity such as walking slowly on the spot, and to gradually help the rhythm of this to increase until quick walking, changes into slow running, which can suddenly escalate into a burst of energy in the legs which will surprise no one so much as the runner.

The father of a friend of mine came for help in a depressed state. I knew his depression was sustained by the inactivity in his whole body. He lay down on the mattress dutifully waiting for me to take his depression away. How could I use the activation field to help him? He was asked to remove his socks without using his hands. He began to wriggle and flip about with his feet, then to try to kick the socks off. The gamma system became ripe for kicking and soon whether the socks were off was of no more importance, but this dignified man was activating his entire body as he experienced the missing assertiveness that lay beneath his depressed state.

Another strong activation field involves the jump, reflex. It is possible to help someone discover, not a mechanical jump, but an organic rhythmic leaping which is nearly always associated with strong joy, and which requires a particular coordination of breathing with flexion and extension of the knee joints. The word hope in English has the same derivation as the word hop. So the depressed person is one who has not only lost contact with hoping, but who has also lost the feeling of hopping in his legs, knees, and ankles.

The Absorption Field

The infant lies quietly, absorbed by the movement of a leaf in the wind, or he rests at the breast in a state of semi-trance. He is geared to receive, to take in impressions, to still his outer activity, and maximise his inner awareness.

For some people resting and taking in has become a secondary style of living which is used to replace activity and initiative. For the passive-dependent person the absorption field is what is known best. One longs for such a person to begin to stir, to move out of rest into movement.

But for hyperactive people the opposite is true: one longs for them to take a rest, to take in, to slow down. The absorption field is the least dramatic of all the fields. One asks the person simply to do nothing, to allow, to take it easy, to experience the self as a source of being instead of as a centre of doing.

A hysterical woman who was always flooded by intense feelings and movements felt her body was as if pricked by dozens of knives. Everything was agitated and restless. She was asked what her image was if she stopped the activity. She replied that she expected to fail asleep. She was then asked to allow this risk to happen. When she lay down and all the activity stopped she did not fall asleep, but discovered she was not inwardly dead, but acutely awake. As she got into contact with her inner life, usually obscured by her outer activity, she developed the insight that all her life she had behaved like an actress in a film.

The Pulsation Field

The heart of the fetus begins beating 21 days after conception. The body has many pulsations. A key pulsation related to emotionality is the rhythm of breathing, which begins directly after birth. The circumstances of birth have a powerful influence on our habits of breathing. Inbreathing begins at birth, as outbreathing ends at death. Every inbreath forms a nourishment and a containment, and builds a charge. Every outbreath provides expression, release, and some level of letting go and discharge, strong or gentle.

Some people emphasise their inbreath more than their outbreath: they are containers or withholders. Others emphasise the outbreath more, they are expressers, releasers or dischargers. The spectrum of contain and release is one of the most basic rhythms of our lives. There is a relationship between the pulsation of breathing and each of the preceding paried motor field, particularly the first four. If one alternates movements of flexion and extension, opening and closing in any joints of the body, with synchronisation in of the breath rhythm,
we have a process of coordination. This coordination is able in micro movements of the spine which take place in relaxed breathing, if a person is tense or sluggish this coordination may be interrupted.

If the therapist encourages or induces a rhythm of opening and closing, for example the legs or arms, in synchrony with the breath, there are two ways of creating this coordination: we can call this the containment stroke and the release stroke.

In the containment stroke we move out and breathe in, extending the arms or legs on the inspiration. In the release stroke we move out, and breathe out, extending the limbs on the expiration. The former builds boundaries and contains charge: it is helpful in states of fear or weakness. The second pattern is helpful in states of tension or blockage: it helps to open boundaries and expression, emotion and charge.

Conclusion

The motoric fields work with the soul of the muscle. They express patterns of latent intentionality. They form the bedrock of the affecto-motoric schemas so basic to development. They join movement to breathing, and movement to feeling, and can be used to construct a new body image reflecting the potentiality, for adaptive response to environmental stress, and for experiencing the joy of living. They are the heart of our non-verbal communication, our system of soma semantics, which we can disregard at our peril, for they account for around 80 percent of our signalling in all face to face relationships.

References

Biography

David Boadella  (born 1931), B.A., M.Ed., D.Sc.hon, Psychotherapist SPV, UKCP and ECP. Studied education, literature and psychology. Trained in character-analytic vegetotherapy, Founder of Biosynthesis. He has spent many years in psychotherapeutic practice. He holds lectures worldwide, and is the author of numerous books and articles. He has been publishing the journal "Energy & Character" since 1970. In 1995 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the "Open International University of Complementary Medicine". A selection of David Boadella's books: "Befreite Lebensenergie / Lifstreads" (Kösel / Routledge), "Wilhelm Reich: The evolution of his work" (Arkana).
The emphasis on the body and its movements can be traced back to Mesmer. One hundred years later, in the hypnotherapeutic tradition which followed in his wake, Hippolyte Bernheim developed his "ideodynamic hypothesis" of the link between internal imagery and movement. In this tradition William James developed in 1890 his "ideomotor" hypothesis, linking the voluntary actions of the muscles with kinaesthetic imagery of the movement intentions. James was one of the founders of the affect-psychology.

The body schema was studied in the same period as James, at the end of the last century by Bonnier, in France, and Wernicke, in Germany. These psychophysicologists were strong influences on Pierre Janet, who put a very strong emphasis in his work on movement and on kinaesthetic sense, basing his work on a century of earlier studies of proprioception and muscle tone. Janet worked directly with muscle tone, and with re-educating the movements of his patients. In 1928 he distinguished sensori-motoric processes as being governed by centripetal and centrifugal movements, and also linked the whole basis of personality to the sensorimotor developments in the womb. Janet had an indirect influence on Paul Schilder, who studied the body image and published his classic book on this theme in 1923. Schilder was in the same tradition from Wernicke, through Liepmann's concept of the "movement plan", and through the work of Henry Head and Holmas, in England, who first used the term body schema. The terms "motor field" and "motor image" were used by the Russian psychophysicologist Bernstein, who also used the term "muscle schemata" in 1967.

Paul Schilder was the teacher of Wilhelm Reich, who developed in 1935 his concepts of the expressive language of the living on the basis of vegetotherapy, influenced by his second wife, Elsa Lindenberg, who was a pupil of the movement therapists Elsa Gindler, and Rudolf Laban. Reich's concept of "muscular armouring" showed that when chronic muscular defences were dissolved, spontaneous affective movements occurred. In 1932, at the same time that Reich was developing his characteranalytic studies of the body and its movements, Bartlett, following Head's work on the body schema, developed his theory of organismic functioning, in which "postural schemata" were fundamental organizers of human behaviour. Influenced by Janet, Piaget developed in 1952 his sensorimotor theory of intelligence, in which cognition develops in intimate association with movement patterns. Although in his genetic epistemology Piaget did not lay much stress on the emotional components in movement, in 1953-4, at the Sorbonne, Piaget developed the concept of "affective schemata" linked to the sensorimotor patterns. Ulric Neisser, in 1976 influenced by Bartlett and Piaget studied "action patterns" of anticipation, showing how the past is carried forward into the future through motoric schemas that direct movements and exploratory activities.

Concepts of body schema, and motoric schema, passed from Bartlett and James into Gestalt psychology, in the work of Koffka, and Goldstein these together with the work of Schilder, were strong influences on the "sensory-tonic" theory of perception developed by Werner and Wapner, in 1949, when they described the dynamic properties of the "sensoric-tonic field" of the body. In this gestalt tradition, Arthur Koestler developed in 1967 his theory of "motor hierarchies" of influence on behaviour. These various traditions have been very thoroughly documented by the Dutch psychologist Tiemersma, in his classic work on the Body Schema and the Body Image, and he most up to date summary of this work in relation to motility, is given by Gallacher.

In 1970, when Energy & Character was founded, I described the work of Neville Coghill with the kinaesthetic rhythms of the fetus in the womb as one of the primary lifestreams governing all human experience and expression. The importance of prenatal life on movement patterns had been emphasised by Pierre Janet, in 1928. In 1977 I published -, article on gravity muscles and heart feelings, in which basic flexor and extensor movement patterns were described in relation to the organization and expression of emotionality and their fundamental importance all therapeutic work with the body was demonstrated. In 1976 Erich Blechschmidt published his book on the origins of life in the womb, and described primary embryodynamic fields of influence on the tissues, which became a prototype for the description of the motoric fields which I developed together with Silvia Boadella more specifically from 1986 onwards for all our Biosynthesis Training Programmes. In 1981 Rupert Sheldrake published the first version of his theory of morphic resonance, and influenced by Koestler related this to motor hierarchies, in his second book, published in 1987.

During 1986, Margaret Mahler published her discovery in her studies of infants of "schemas of a practical, preverbal, sensomotoric and senso- affective nature". Mahler's description of the psychological birth of the self is closely supported by detailed observations of the somatic developmental processes of infant development.

Following the work of Piaget and Neisser and Koffka, Greenberg, Rice and Elliott, in 1993, developed their theory of emotional schemas as "action structures" governing behavior. The Swiss psychologist, Klaus Grawe, basing himself in this tradition, and very solidly on Greenberg, Rice and Elliott, developed a comprehensive theory of emotional, and motivational schemata, in which the integration of cognition, perception, and emotion were emphasised, but in which the motoric components fell rather into the background.
Building on Piaget's (1953-4) connection of affect with sensorimotor schemas, Daniel Stern, in 1979, reinforces the fact that the three aspects always occur together: the human being is governed by affecto-sensory-motoric schemas. Stern introduced also the concept of "motoric memory" and of the "motor self". Building on the work of Stern, and Mahler, and from original work with infants at the Salpetriere clinic, where Pierre Janet had worked a century earlier George Downing has shown in 1996 the importance of "affecto motoric schemas" in body psychotherapy. He has confirmed to me that he sees his concept as closely parallel to my concept of motoric fields.

Glossary of 40 terms related to Motoric Fields

Action structures, Greenberg, Rice & Elliot, 1993.
Affectomotoric schemas, Stern, 1979, Downing, 1996.
Affective schemata, Piaget, 1954
Affective-cognitive schemas, Ciompi, 1982.
Body image, Schilder, 1923.
Body ego, Freud 1923, Federn 1926.
Body schema, Bonnier, 1905, Head and Holmes, 1911.
Body subject, Merleau Ponty, 1945.
Embryodynamic fields, Blechschmidt, 1976.
Emotional schemes,Greenberg, Rice & Elliot, 1993.
Ideodynamic principle, Bernstein, 1886.
Ideomotor principle, James, 1890.
Kinaesthetic sense, Bastian, 1866.
Morphic resonance, Sheldrake, 1981.
Moverrient plan, Liepmann, 1900.
Movement images, Munk, 1890.
Movement attitude, Janet, 1929.
Motor field, Bernstein, 1967.
Motor image, Bernstein, 1967.
Motor hierarchy, Koestler, 1967
Motor scheme, Tiemersma, 1982.
Muscle schemata, Bernstein, 1967.
Muscle sense, Bell, 1826.
Muscular armouring, Reich, 1933.
Proprioceptive field, Sherrington, 1906.
Proprioceptive person, Wallon, 1954.
Postural images, Bonnier, 1893.
Postural model, Head and Holmes, 1911.
Postural schemata, Bartlett, 1932.
Sensori-motoric schemas, Piaget, 1952.
Sensori-affective schemas, Mahler, 1986.
Sensori-tonic field, Wapner and Werner, 1949.
Somatopsychic, Wernicke, 1893.
Somatopsychosocial fields, Swiss Charita, 1999.

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Biography

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Embodied Intentionality

Milton Corrêa, M.Sc., Ph.D. and Esther Frankel, M.A.

Abstract

Intentionality is a property of any living system. The individual intentionality is the result of different levels of intentionality from cells to the organism as a whole. In this article the authors show how the body, motor fields and individual intentionality are nested in a field of intentionality.

Keywords

Embodied intentionality - Motor fields - Organism

One remarkable principle that leads us to an understanding of what the mind really is, is the concept of intentionality which has been reinserted into the western world since the XIX century, by the philosopher Brentano (Caston, 2001), in Vienna. Its roots were already to be found in Aristotle when he claimed that it is through intention or the process of thinking that the soul appears to originate movement in animals (Aristotle, 1978).

The etymology of the word “intentionality” comes from the Latin word “intendere,” that consists of the prefix “in”, plus “tendere” - or “tensum” - which means “to narrow” or “to be next to”. The concept of intention, although different, is directly related to intentionality, and in its etymological roots means “to stay next or toward something”. Intentionality is a useful structure, which helps us to give meaning to the reality that surround us - and through this process the dichotomy between subject and object is partially overcome.

One of the properties of a system with intentionality (aboutness) is to be able to refer to objects or situations in the world - whether real or not (Searle, 1997). Thus, for instance, when one says that an object points to another object, this is a property of the mind’s intentionality, because, in the world, no object points to another. According to Brentano, the property of pointing to something in the world can be considered the basis of consciousness. It is the act of intentionality that feeds consciousness with meaningful content. In Rollo May's words (May 1969), Brentano was Freud’s and Husserl’s teacher, so we can easily find traces of intentionality in Freud's work: “intentionality is built into the warp and woof of Freud's approach to free association, dreams, and fantasies. The reason Freud does not mention the concept explicitly may be the same reason it has been left out of other aspects of our academic and scientific psychology. Freud wanted to establish a natural-science form of psychology for his psychoanalysis and, explicit intentionality - the missing link between the mind and body - makes such a task infinitely more difficult, if not impossible”. Husserl, considered the founder of modern phenomenology, has recognised the link between “intention” and “meaning”, which links meaning, action and movement to something: “meaning is an intention of the mind”, in Husserl’s words (May 1969).

The basis upon which the most recent theories of Discourse and Dialogue were built, was launched by Austin (Austin 1962) and improved by Searle (Searle, 1969) and Grice (Grice, 1957). They claimed that the statements uttered in dialogue are actions that they called “speech acts”, and the comprehension of speech is decoded in an intentional network, which brings the understanding of what the speaker wants to say. For instance, when one person says to another: “You're stepping on my foot”, usually, the answer would not be “Yes”, and then no action, but, "Sorry", followed by the immediate action of removing the foot - unless the real intention is to step on the other person's foot. The act of lifting an arm may be, on one hand, an act of communication (such as a goodbye gesture); or, on the other hand, calling for a cab.

Intentionality is what gives us sense and structures our relationships with the outside world: what we mean to ourselves, what we are and how we are. The mental states such as belief, desire, intention, expectation, value, hope, trust, fear, shame, guilt etc. are components of an intentional network through which one system means and interacts with the world. Many emotions, which occur in people’s interactions with the world, are correlated and dependent on intentionality in these interactions.

Any living system - from a cell to a human being - has intentionality. According to Maturana and Varella (Maturana, 1980), what characterises a living system is a property they call “autopoiesis”, which can be understood as the capacity of a system to permanently produce by itself the elements necessary to reproduce itself, while at the same time, working as a unit in time and space. There is a strong correlation between autopoiesis, cognition and intentionality.

A living system is composed of individuals and several inter-related subsystems, which fit inside one another. The same happens with human societies and ecological systems. What keeps these individuals organised in a society is the collective or joint intentionality, which includes a network of joint intentional elements (Tuomela, 1995) such as joint beliefs, joint desires, joint intentions and joint expectations, as well as trust and cooperation. The role of joint intention is already widely acknowledged, and studied in the functioning of group work (Corrêa, 2004).

Another question is how intentionality is grounded in the physical body and what is its physiological basis. The answer to this question would be a contribution to a neurophysiological understanding of behaviour, and is a
strong research field and debate in psychology, psychosomatics and, in particular, in Biosynthesis - as shown by David Boadella (Boadella, 1992, Boadella, 1993).

An individual's intentionality is the result of different levels of intentionalities, from his cells to his organism as a whole.

Intentionality is information: it informs the world within the system, while the system will inform the world through its actions.

Both the quantity and quality of the energy levels of the movement, as well as its shape, reflect the intentionality, which have created it. Using the same logic, a body posture reflects the intentionality of the person who generates it. For instance, in a hypotonic person, energy tends to migrate towards his/her head in order to protect himself/herself against emotional contact with a mother who, in spite of being physically present, was at an intentionality level, diffuse and ambivalent.

In Ira Black's (Black 1994) words "the quality of aboutness or intentionality may well be approachable in terms of neuronal manipulation of transmitter symbols as molecular symbols combinatorial processing, and electromechanical coding neural system". Intentionality is inserted in neuronal structures of the brain and emerges as a result of their interaction. In this process, even the smallest unit, the molecular symbol, receives, converts, encodes, stores and transmits information. The molecular symbols carry their own meanings according to the specific neuronal system in which the molecules are produced. The same molecular symbol for instance can have different meanings in the sensory, somatic motor or autonomic systems. Thus, the molecular symbolic system and behaviour are inseparable; the cognitive function is inseparable from the nervous system in which it is inserted.

Scientific research in psychobiology shows that the shifting of the brain between different modes of processing information is an important component in the generation of motivational states and expectations (Schore, 1994, Rilling, 2002), it is shown that cooperation is associated with consistent activation in brain areas that have been linked with reward processing in the cortex. In other terms, intentionality is a function of the organisation of brain structures and neuronal processing patterns.

Our mental states are physiologically processed in specific neuronal systems, in which communicative molecules are produced. These molecules have a semantic and a symbolic function representing an external and internal reality. The environment stimulus regulates the molecular state and function. Molecular semantics cannot be separated from the neuronal and nervous system context.

In the human body, millions of cells interact with each other in a communicating network, where molecules transmit information - these are called messenger molecules. Thinking is not only the result of neuronal activity in the brain, but also the work of every cell of our body. The body thinks; and thought is the result of complex interactions at various levels of the body's intentionality.

The brain is well integrated with the body at the molecular level (Pert, 1997). The term "mobile brain" describes the psychosomatic network through which intelligent information flows from one system to another. Each one of the systems of the network - the neural, hormonal, gastrointestinal and imunologic - is ready to communicate with the others via neuropeptids and receptors. At each second, a massive exchange of information takes place in the body. If we could imagine a specific tone vibrating for each one of these messenger systems, we would call that resultant body melody, emotions. Neuropeptids and receptors, the emotional biochemists, are messenger molecules that carry information and link the main body systems in a whole is called the body-mind. Emotion can be seen as cellular signals that are involved with the process of translating information to physical reality, transforming mind into matter.

We can conceive the mind as a permanent flow of information between cells, organs and body systems. The mind itself has a non-physical component, the flow of information. It also has a physical component, the brain and the body. Thus, the mind is something that permanently keeps the whole networking and functioning, behind our consciousness, linking and co-ordinating the systems, its organs and cells in an intelligent orchestra that plays the symphony of life. We are referring to a psychosomatic network of information formed by molecules, cells and organs, somehow, linked to our psyche and which, in its turn, is composed of the mind, emotion, and soul.

The quality of intentionality emerges from the interactions at the different levels in the components of this network.

Nowadays, many robot projects and artificial intelligent systems demand an architecture based on attributions of intentionality to those systems (Corrêa, 2004, Dennet, 1987). Research with these systems shows at least attributions of mental states, such as belief, desire, and intention are very important to organize dialogues. Intentionality defined according to formal logic is precisely imprinted in the chips of computers and robots. Also, non-mental things, according to Dretske (Dretske, 1988) can show intentionality. According to him, a device that carries information does exhibit some degree of intentionality. In Corrêa & Gomes (Corrêa, 2004) it is shown that the intentional system can be applied also to classic physics.

Research with artificial systems are very important because their formal models contribute to a precise understanding of intentionality.

The aim of this article is not to present definitions of intentional elements in formal logic (Corrêa, 2004). The following definitions (presented below) come from philosophy, communications theory as well as systems theory,
according to its common use in psychology. Some of the intentional elements more in use and better defined in scientific literature are: beliefs, desires, intentions, and expectations.

Beliefs as well as knowledge - are inner images of the world, the world’s introjections and patterns of self-images, memories of sensations and emotions and one’s own history. The main difference between beliefs and knowledge lies in the degree of certainty. Beliefs are attributed to subjectivity and uncertainty, while knowledge is attributed to objectivity and certainty.

Two other mental states that can be easily confused are intention and desire. For instance, an ordinary person could have the desire (but not the intention) to go to the moon. On the other hand, the astronaut Neil Armstrong certainly had both the desire and intention to do so, since he achieved this aim.

The main difference between these two mental states is that intention demands; a belief that the goal is truly possible to achieve; the proper knowledge of how it is going to be achieved; and a commitment to achieving this goal (Bratman, 1999). Other components of intentions are: degree of importance; urgency and persistence (Corrêa, 2004).

Desire is a field of possibilities for action and achievement. Desire itself does not require commitment, belief or knowledge, but is a source of motivation and impulse for the production of intention.

In Frankel and Corrêa (Frankel, 1999) we have shown how to understand the characterological tendencies of a client in psychotherapy by building a context that includes his mental states, such as intention, desire, beliefs, expectations, his own history, his body and how his body functions. Those mental states can be extended by including guilt, shame, fear etc. This is “characterological intentionality”. In the same article we also define “essential intentionality” as being the formative process towards one’s connection to one’s own body, one’s qualities, relationships and one’s trust in the meaning of life. Essential intentionality underlies the autopoietic process: self-regulation and creativity.

One of the foundations of biosynthesis is the concept of motor fields (Boadella, 2000), which are motor patterns of movement intentionality and communicative expressions through speech acts. These fields are our primal alphabet that we learn since uterine life, during the birth experience, during the first stages in our post-natal life such as crawling and standing and during all later skills. Eight of them are paired into four sets of two. The ninth motor field is unpaired. They are flexion-extension; traction-opposition; rotation-canalisation; activation –absorption; and pulsation. These are our original “motor-affect schemes” (Boadella, 2000). Movements and body postures are manifestations of the motor fields nested in the different levels of the field of intentionality (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Body and motor fields nested in the field of intentionality**

According to Boadella, understood in terms of tendencies of the motor fields ways to help the client get rid of his characterological intentionality is to possibilities of his motor consciousness, unconscious (Frankel, 2000). The solution was.

Clinical examples

John

John is a successful businessman. He has been the chief provider to his family since childhood, overcoming difficult financial problems and threats of bankruptcy. He could never fail and became a workaholic. His belief is that he must take care of everything and everybody and never need anything for himself. His greatest shame is “to need” and he does not accept gifts from anyone: he must be the one to give. He came for therapy because of his explosive and tense behaviour plus the problem of alcoholism, which was getting worse. He could not sleep and his relationship with his much-loved wife was suffering because of his explosions of rage and impulsiveness.

His body is compressed, dense, strong and his neck is small and very hard. This body shape and behaviour reflect his characterological intentionality. When he was a child, John was active, happy and naughty. He liked to tame horses. Because of these qualities, he became his father’s favourite. His father was a very responsible and hard-working man, who through much hard work had built up a good position in life. When John was 14, his father became ill and remained bed-ridden until his death. From that moment on, John assumed his father’s role, taking
care of the whole family. When John was 19, his father asked him if he could save his elder brother's business from bankruptcy. This pattern reoccurred several times in John's life. In other words, we can observe emotional abuse in John's life. The quality of his embodiment, his characterological tendencies, his dense, compressed, hyperactive body armour hides within it this man's tendencies: the colour of the wounds of a boy who loves horses, a symbol of freedom; his "essential intentionality" lurks behind his character.

In terms of motor fields John demonstrated the polarities of activation, canalisation and opposition in dealing with life. Behind these we also found the intentionality of absorption, rotation and traction in his images, memories and feelings about his childhood.

After a few psychotherapy sessions, when John was able to lie down and relax in the absorption field, he expressed his desire to be in a bar, wearing shorts, with no shirt, just like an ordinary guy, drinking bear and laughing at his friends' jokes, with nothing to do or to fear, free as a rolling stone. At other moments, he has expressed his desire to get rid of a part of his business in order to live a simpler and less busy life. In another session, when John received support for his back from his therapist, he could subtly express through his body his desire to fly and be free, moving his arms just like a bird spreading its wings. His body, while he flew, seemed slender and light. The flow of those intentionalities was releasing him from the abuses he had suffered as a child, due to the early necessity to assume his father's role.

Tereza

Tereza is a tall, strong, affirmative woman who usually reacts to things with a suspicious and aggressive attitude. Her childhood was stolen from her by an abusive family, an absent mother, an alcoholic father, and a stepfather who continually molested her with obscene remarks and sexual gestures. The girl, in order to defend herself, has developed a strong and aggressive body, a mistrust of groups of people, losing contact with her vulnerability and deeper needs, using mainly the motor fields of extension, opposition and activation. One of her complaints is a strange sensation of unreality, which stops her from feeling professionally fulfilled. Her belief is that she must be strong and aggressive in order to defend her mother from an aggressive, violent and alcoholic father and that she can never be vulnerable or dependent.

The stronger someone's beliefs are, the harder and more painful the task will be to change them. If those beliefs support a “characterological intention”, this will be more firmly established in the individual's behaviour. One of the ways to dilute this intention is to undermine these beliefs, offering the client other beliefs that can substitute for them, or even weaken the same beliefs by presenting evidence that can overturn them. Another possibility is to weaken the desire that supports the intention in a similar way, or to give support to other intentions, which can be used against the characterological intention, such as an emerging essential intentionality.

An example of this happened in one therapy session with Teresa, where the therapist was totally present, next to her, not invading her space but observing, listening, maintaining contact, slowly approaching her. Through a strategy of “exchanging roles”, the therapist asked her how she took care of her five year old daughter. The therapist carefully listened to the quality of the maternal care and holding she was offering her daughter, and then invited the client to take the place of her own daughter, while she (the therapist) would be the mother. Gradually, Tereza began to believe that she could trust and receive support from other people and, like a child, had a subtle desire to lay her head on the therapist's lap. Tereza's expression changed completely; a softer expression, more trusting, with desires and expectations about her life (motor fields of flexion, traction and absorption).

With the help of the respectful, tender and caring presence of her therapist, Tereza, in a short while, was able to return to her own home-body, rescuing herself from the kidnapped and dissociated part of herself which belonged to the wounded, abandoned and frightened child who had suffered a lot from the relationship she had with her mother. She could rid herself of that part, which had made her, for a long time, feel a stranger amongst her own family, denying her loved ones, with a deep feeling of sadness which had brought the sensation of unreality. She had used that to help her survive, but which was now complicating her adult life as a woman and a professional person.

Every intention is an attention, and attention is related to, 'I can'. We are unable to give attention to something until we are able to experience an 'I can' with regard to it.

Now Tereza can. Tereza needed a lot of psychotherapy before she could remember important facts of her childhood and surrender to her essential intentionality allowing herself to be vulnerable, dependent and needy. What happened is a change in her relation to her world as a consequence of greater trust in the therapist and a reduction of neurotic anxiety.

Her embodied intentionality has changed. She is ready to take new body and behaviour positions in her life. She now realises that she can trust and has received the validation of her feelings. In her own words, beforehand she had to use a sickle to open dark places and now she sees herself flowing down a path lit by faces that bless her. This surrender of her character was conscious. Undoing the rigidity of her spine, Tereza could contact her
childhood depression and there receive the support she always needed. She could do this bodily. She feels herself real, validated in her profession, believing in her work.

In these two clinical cases not only the individual intentionalities were present but also the joint intentionality of the therapist and the client which in essence is the thing which permits the therapeutic process to evolve.

Couples

It is very common to receive couples who have no doubt about the love they feel for each other, and, even though they do not wish to separate, they are not able to establish a harmonious love life, with both of them on the verge of an individual collapse and separation. They live in a tragedy from which they are not able to escape, in a growing process of mutual destruction. The essential joint intentionality is blocked by both the individual and joint characterological intentionalities which dominate the couples’ relationship. An effective way to heal the couple is to re-establish the joint commitment to the couples’ intentionality: their common values, the feelings that brought them together, what they have built together, the love they feel for their children, and, in particular, to re-establish or even teach them - essential communication through which they can communicate their feelings and emotions.

Conclusion

When working with intentionality, one is working with the body acting simultaneously in all the network of interactions: organic, muscular, neuronal and molecular. In helping the patient to change a belief, for instance, we may be interacting with a possible intention supported by this belief, and, consequently, also interacting in the physiological system which supports this network of intentionality. In our view the function of psychotherapy is to invite the client towards an encounter with a deeper, wider, organic dimension of his embodied intentionality.

References


Biography

Esther Frankel (M.A.) was born in 1948 in Brazil, daughter of Jews from Poland. She is one of the pioneers of Body Psychotherapy in Brazil. She is a clinical psychologist trained by Jean Piaget's team at the University of Geneva. As a Body Psychotherapist she was trained by Gerda Boyesen, David Boadella, Alexander Lowen, and Albert Pesso. She is a member of the European Association for Body Psychotherapy. She was a teacher of Pontificia Universidade Catolica de Rio de Janeiro. She is an International Trainer in Biosynthesis, Director of the Biosynthesis Program and an International Consultant in Biosynthesis.
Milton Correa (born 1947), Engineer, MSc in Computer Science and PhD in Artificial Intelligence. He is a Cognitive Scientist, Biosynthesis Psychotherapist and Trainer, vice director and teacher of the Biosynthesis School of Rio de Janeiro, who is seeking to build a bridge between the sciences of information, body-psychotherapy and Biosynthesis. His research areas are: the science and philosophical foundations of Body Psychotherapy and Biosynthesis, Artificial Intelligence, Cognitive Science and Complexity Theory.

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The Tree of Man:  
Fundamental Dimensions of Biosynthesis  

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Abstract  
This article is the text of a speech first presented at the First Congress of Biosynthesis at Palma de Mallorca, Spain, in 1998. It seeks to give a metaphorical presentation, using the image of the different parts of a tree, of the Biosynthesis concept of “life fields.” The seven life fields are on the one hand areas of experience and expression in daily life; secondly they are possible modalities of therapeutic approach; thirdly they have a connection, in the body, to the seven segments described by Wilhelm Reich, and in the subtle energy field to the energy centres (known as “chakras”).

Keywords  
Energy center – Energy field - Tree of man

Introduction  

The symbol of the Tree of Life, which stood at the centre of the world, is as old as mythology. The Tree of life, which stretched between heaven and earth became transformed into the tree of mankind, the body of the human being, placed between the ground under his feet and the sky over his head.

In my presentation of the fundamental dimensions of Biosynthesis I will use this metaphor of the tree as an integrating framework for understanding the relationship between the different parts of our common work.

Lifestreams: Roots of Embodiment  

A tree has roots which anchor it to the earth, and provide essential nourishment. In Nordic mythology the sacred world tree had three roots which were well springs of life, allowing a flow of energy into the body of the world.  

In Biosynthesis, the three tree roots correspond to what I have called the three lifestreams. I think everyone in Biosynthesis is familiar with this foundational concept from functional embryology: the three tubes of our somatic formation, building inner, outer, and in between tissues. The three associated affect-streams, the stream of feeling associated with being well nourished physically and emotionally, the stream of feeling associated with free and graceful movements, and the stream of affect associated with pleasurable contact to the skin and the sense organs. All three affect streams can of course be negatively loaded: this is what the somatic ground floor of neurosis is all about: the contractions, and stresses within and between the organ systems, as the integration among the three streams becomes split and dysfunctional.

The three streams are grounded in our morphology and physiology, expressed in our energetic metabolism: in the psychological realm they become the three great arenas of concern: what is happening in the emotional system, what is happening in our behaviour, posture and action patterns, and what is happening in how we sense and make sense of the world. We call this the ABC of Biosynthesis: affect, behaviour, cognition.

The roots of the tree suck up nourishment, which travels in conduits through the tree nourishing the whole organism at many vertical levels of being. Similarly, the three lifestreams are associated with resonant levels of information at all levels of our being: we can distinguish three forms of language: language describing events, what happened; language describing feelings; and language describing beliefs and attitudes. This is the life stream principle mapped onto language. In spiritual traditions we find a basic teaching of the tripartite nature of man. This has relationships to the trinity teachings within Christianity which go back to the Egyptian myth of Osiris, Horus and Isis. Osiris, the dying king, was symbolised in the body by the backbone, the axis of movement. His symbol was a tree. We remember that Jesus was crucified on a tree, but the same tree became a symbol for resurrection, as it had earlier done for Osiris. Isis, his partner, was symbolised by waves, and by wings, connected to breathing and the lungs. Horus their child was symbolised by an eye, the eye of clarity. When clarity was obscured, one spoke of the mask of Horus, the false face hiding the true self. In the Buddhist tradition we remember that Buddha received enlightenment under a tree. The Tibetans have brought us the concept of three conductors, channels of inspiration, which can be seen as the highest level of expression of the three life streams. They are compassion, the feeling for the other; compassionate action, good handling in relation to the other; and wisdom, insight into one self, others and the world.

Life Fields: Levels of Expression  

Out of the roots of the tree grows the trunk, the vertical stem, the main body of the tree.
The trunk rises out of the ground and stretches towards the light. In the human body we also speak of the trunk, and the base of the trunk is spoken of as the root centre of the body. The trunk in the body is held together by the spine, the axis of the motor system, and the channel for the motor nerves, the sensory nerves, and the associated vegetative system.

The spine has seven natural nodes where it curves and bends, and on these nodes are situated the centres of our subtle energy system, linked to the major glands of the body. The trunk of the spine is the main integrating axis of the body, stretching from pelvis to brain, passing through the nerve centres regulating digestion and sexuality, to those keeping the heart in balance, to the throat and language, the eyes and vision, the ears and hearing, and finally the brain itself, the most complex piece of matter in nature.

In Biosynthesis we speak of the levels of expression associated with the vertical segments of the spine as "life fields". Sexuality is a life field. Language is a life field.

The client who comes to us in therapy presents his problems in one or more of these life fields. The life fields give us different ways of accessing his problem: we can choose whether to work with the life field of movement (the so called motoric fields), or with the life field of belief systems, or with the complications of the transference. Therapeutic work seeks to move up and down between the life fields, helping the person to gain more integration with himself helping inner communication and transfer of information, as a basis for resolving problems, tensions, and knots of personal relationship. The life fields correspond to the points on what we call the hexagram of Biosynthesis, which is different routes of therapeutic access: for example working with dreams to reach the breathing; or working through emotional clearance, to free a deeper sense of spirituality.

Life-lines: Networks of Connectedness

The tree does not stand alone: it is an organism in a forest of other organisms. The tree puts out flowers and attracts insects. It sends out spores in the four directions of the winds. It can fertilise and be fertilised. Its leaves form part of the bed of the forest and form nourishment for other trees. The tree is part of an ecosystem.

The human being also does not stand alone. He has lifelines of relationship stretching before him in time back through parents and grandparents. Twenty generations of influence, and we are back in the middle of the middle ages. The number of people each lifeline, if each one stood for a generation, takes us back before the pyramids were built in Egypt, to the dawn of civilisation and culture. We have life lines stretching after us: our children, and grandchildren; not only the ones we generate physically, but the ones we generate professionally: the lineages of therapeutic movements, of cultural transmission.

Then we have the lifelines with our contemporaries, sexual relationships with partners, the whole immense process of forming a co-territory with another human being, the compromise between autonomy and dependency, separation and merging.

A former student and colleague of mine from England outlined a rich model of the therapeutic relationship with five key aspects, each of which has two polar distortions: I can't go into the model in detail, but will just outline the five kinds of relationship she describes, each of which is important in therapy, and also in normal human relationships.

First she describes the working alliance, the contractual frame in therapy. Contracts can be written, or verbal, but they are agreements within which responsibility is exercised. Broken agreements are wounds to the frame. The frame is a container for the other four kinds of relationship.

Secondly, there is our old friend the transference relationship. What is transferred is old attitudes, feelings, and expectations, from the past to the present: it is a form of conditioning which limits opportunities in the present. Transference work is work to make the conditioning conscious and help a person to move beyond it. But, not all relationship is transference. Thirdly, there is what my colleague calls the real relationship. This is the human equality of two people beyond their roles. There is room for real anger from therapist to client and vice versa, which does not have to be conditioned by childhood. There is room for real sense of loss when a client leaves after five years of therapy. We must be careful not to interpret every real feeling as a reductive effect of a childhood cause. Fourthly, there is the developmental relationship, which is a key factor in Biosynthesis, which works with developmental patterns of growth. This relationship helps the other to evolve new skills. It is future building, not past-searching. Finally, there is the spiritual level in a relationship, the meeting between two human beings as a unique encounter and opportunity, which has never occurred before in that way, and will never occur again in quite the same way. The mystery and magic of presence, the numinal awareness of a deeper ground that sustains a relationship that is able to contact it.
Lifescapes: Patterns of Experience

The tree has rings. Every year the trunk expands and lays down a new ring. The gigantic sequoia in California, wide enough to drive a car through, has 4000 rings. Each ring lays down a new layer of history. The lifetime of the tree is coded in its rings.

The human being, in this lifetime, incarnates into a fertilised cell, which doubles and doubles, around 32 times, until there are thousands and millions of cells. From prenatal life the human emerges through the birth canal into postnatal existence: everything that happened from birth until the present. But we have fantasies, dreams, longings, and plans for what is to come: we are building what Stanley Keleman calls the long body of time, evolving towards some future point, consciously or blindly driven: this is our premarital time: all that remains waiting for us in this life. Finally, there is the post mortal segment of experience, which we access in dreams, in archetypal visions, in so called past life memories, or reincarnation scripts: our images around death and what might lie beyond it.

History, and the history which will come, which we call the future, is mingled with images, colourings from the perceptions of others. Memory is a mixture of fact and fiction, experience means what we have lived through, it is a mixture of the objective and the subjective and the intersubjective. This is what I call lifescapes, the stories we tell ourselves about where we have come from and where we are going, our dreams, visions of the pasts, visions of the future, and the tapestry we are weaving of our lives, the pageant of our embodiment.

Working with memory, in the middle of the false memory debate, with its polarisation between fact and fiction, we are trying to tease out the meanings of experience, and to help a client to reframe those meanings so he becomes a conscious agent in his own drama, and not just a victim of other people, or a victim of blind forces that threw him into existence. Lifescapes means the shapes of a person’s life story, including his dreams, his paintings, his poems, and his songs of triumph and despair. This is the region where poetry and therapy, music and therapy, drama and therapy, overlap and cross fertilise each other.

Life Forms: Structures of Integration

The tree has branches. Wilhelm Reich wrote: a crooked tree never grows straight.

Trees can be deformed, or well formed. They can be blasted or withered by harsh conditions, or they can be objects of beauty that take our breath away. The form of the tree is to do with how it is structured, the proportion of its branches, and the balance of its being.

In psychotherapy we have the concept of structure, and deficiencies of structure. When there is too little structure in a person we have a lack of coherence, a tendency to disintegrate. Structure is missing. The extreme form of this is a psychotic state, full of incoherence. Intense energies are moving, or congealed, but the person is unable to structure them, or to integrate the pains in his life. A borderline state is a state without boundaries. A person without boundaries feels he has no skin: he is like a tree whose bark has been ripped off, overly vulnerable, easily becoming emotionally sick. Psychotherapy only deals with levels of structure up to the so called normal person, who has normal structure, what Reich called homo normalis. Is that all psychotherapy is, a technology to make us normal? Hopefully not, and we have terms like “individuation” which mean to become undivided. When Alexander Lowen wanted to find a metaphor for the splits in the human being, he took a tree stump split in half with an axe. Individuation is healing the splits, bridging the gaps in our integration, becoming more whole. The tree of man in the Kabala, with its upper and lower, right and left modalities, is a symbol of the wholeness of man. In Biosynthesis we work a great deal with the concept of polarities, the extremes of fixations at one pole or the other, and the pulsation between poles. Higher levels of structure exist than being normal, but they are not gross structures, made of mass, or ego concepts, they are fine structures in the subtle energy system.

Meditation is a way of fine tuning, and thus restructuring the energy field. So life forms relate to the different stages of coherence a person is going through in his life development, and is related to his personal and spiritual growth, not to his aging on the time axis.

When working with life forms we are concerned with helping a person to progress in his life, to evolve on his path, to become more sensitive to new possibilities and directions, and less satisfied with previous levels of adaptation or adjustment.

Life Grounds: Foundations of Support

The tree’s roots are deeply embedded in the soil. They stretch as far underground as the branches spread above the ground. The tree is anchored in earth, and sucks up the moisture from the rain, drinking thousands of litres a day.
In Biosynthesis we are concerned with many forms of ground. The first of these is of course the physical ground, our stability on the earth, our sense to be rooted on the planet or not.

But, this physical grounding is only the first kind of grounding. There is sexual grounding with the body of the other. There is the home ground of nature, and associations with a particular place. There is the human ground of a family or a community.

There is the conceptual ground of a language system or a belief structure. There is the inner ground of faith in the meaning of one's life.

These various grounds, actual or remembered or imagined, are part of a person's resources. They are sources of strength to support him in crises, they are wellsprings of healing to nourish him in times of stress. In neurosis we remember the traumas and forget the lifegrounds.

The most important aspect of working with trauma is to reanimate the life grounds. A woman deprived of her father at the age of one remembers the earthy comfort and support of his hand in the first year of life. A woman doing a guided fantasy into the volcanic hole in the centre of her heart discovers at the bottom of the hole a bottle containing the message at the bottom of every black hole: there is milk and honey. A man has a dream in which his dead father expresses forgiveness for his punishments in childhood. A woman dying of cancer puts a bird's nest on her table. A person who suffered traumatic abuse remembers and rediscovers, a dog that can help her run to a safe place where she can for the first time feel secure.

The most touching example comes not from a therapy session, but from a newspaper cutting from the Second World War. A ten-year-old girl, imprisoned in Auschwitz, kept a diary, which was discovered after she had died during the Holocaust, in which she had written the following, “Every day I look through the barbed wire and I see a tree. This tree helps to remind me of the beauty and power of life.”

Life Rays: Qualities of Inspiration and Incarnation

The top of the tree is called the crown, as the top of the head of the human being is called the crown. The crown of the tree consists of leaves sucking in air, and bathing in light.

The photosynthesis of the tree provides the energy for the Biosynthesis of its body. In our form of Biosynthesis, we are dealing with our access to spirit, which means breath, and to light, which is a symbol for our qualities.

Modern psychotherapy tends to distrust and fear spirituality, as something esoteric and cultic. But, I have shown in a recent article that all forms of psychotherapy have from the beginning been inspired by spiritual sources, as well as by their psychodynamic or behavioural or body psychotherapeutic concepts. In Biosynthesis, the spiritual nourishment of the human being is given a central place, in contrast to the spiritual homelessness which characterises all forms of existential despair.

In some forms of esoteric teaching the qualities are symbolised or understood as rays of light descending on us from a spiritual dimension of being. In an earlier article I referred to these as light streams, in contrast to the life streams at our roots.

Wilhelm Reich wrote that at the bottom of every neurosis, under every painful state and tortured condition, there lies a simple, decent, clear state of being human. He called it the core. We call it the essence. Christians call it the soul. Spirituality is in essence very simple: the Danish spiritual teacher Bob Moore calls it the feeling for what you are doing. It is the mystery behind the problem, the healing behind the wound, the true face behind the mask of Horus, the qualities which are needing to manifest if the life stresses are to be dealt with in clear ways.

In Buddhism, the quality dimension of being is symbolised by the open or clear sky. Clouds can obscure it, but it is always there. Sometimes we glimpse it, and forget it again.

Sometimes, like people who live in a city and have never seen the night sky, we have no sense of it, but it works invisibly over us. Sometimes, this clear sky becomes a resource we can contact daily: at such times we feel "enlightened." However, it is not a permanent state, but a reminder of the unclouded nature of our basic being. From this unclouded nature come out basic qualities: the capacity for love, for insight, for courage in the face of demons, for faith in spite of the tortures of war, for trust in the force of life.

The quality dimension of being, as understood in Biosynthesis, is transsomatic but embodied, transpersonal but personally incarnated, indestructible, yet capable of being forgotten, overlaid, and clouded. We can forget our qualities, but they do not forget us.

The tree is constantly gaining the benefit of the sun's rays from the clear sky, even when no sun in visible. From the depths of schizophrenia comes the image of the black sun, and the healing of schizophrenia involves transforming this image of the black sun into the sense of human warmth unfreezing the qualities of a person out of their state of hibernation.

A woman, with a schizophrenic background, noticed an apple, the fruit of a tree, on the table of her therapist. The therapist noticed the longing in her eyes, and offered her the apple to eat.

The woman at first declined, but the longing remained, and in the next session she bit into the apple. It is a moment she remembers when she became more real, grounding herself on the flesh of the world.
beginning of turning the corner in relation to transforming her problems.

**Conclusion**

I have tried to give an outline of fundamental dimensions of Biosynthesis, using the tree metaphor. It is my vision of the work we are involved with. I have not spoken of methods, techniques, therapeutic principles: these come afterwards. The dimensions I have spoken of are not only therapeutic, but pre-therapeutic and transtherapeutic. They underlie the work in hundreds of fields of application.

We wish you a creative, productive and rewarding congress, both personally and professionally. Thank you for listening.

**Biography**

**David Boadella** (born 1931), B.A., M.Ed., D.Sc.hon, Psychotherapist SPV, UKCP and ECP. Studied education, literature and psychology. Trained in character-analytic vegetotherapy. Founder of Biosynthesis. He has spent many years in psychotherapeutic practice. He holds lectures worldwide, and is the author of numerous books and articles. He has been publishing the journal "Energy & Character" since 1970. In 1995 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the "Open International University of Complementary Medicine". A selection of David Boadella's books: “Befreite Lebensenergie / Lifestreams” (Kösel / Routledge), “Wilhelm Reich: The evolution of his work” (Arkana).

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Depth-Psychological Roots of Biosynthesis

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Abstract
Biosynthesis has depth psychological roots, is centered in the humanistic tradition of psychotherapy which is process oriented, and has deep connections within the transpersonal tradition. The body-psychotherapeutic aspects are common to all three. This article emphasizes the roots of Biosynthesis in character-analysis and its extensions, in the British psycho-dynamic tradition, and in the sign-oriented approach of attachment theory.

Keywords
Attachment theory - Biosynthesis - Depth-psychological roots in Biosynthesis - Transpersonal tradition

Biosynthesis is a form of somatic and depth-psychology oriented psychotherapy founded by David Boadella and developed further by Silvia Boadella, Ph.D. and the International Training Faculty of Biosynthesis over the past thirty years.

David Boadella was a trainee and analysand of Dr. Ola Raknes, who was a former member of the Berlin Psycho-analytical Institute and a member of the Scandinavian Psycho-analytical Association. Dr. Raknes was himself a trainee of Dr. Karen Horney and of Dr. Wilhelm Reich (see below).

Biosynthesis is connected to and is rooted in ten principle branches of psycho-dynamic and depth-psychological knowledge which are described below.

The economic theory of affect, drives, and psychic energy

This theory was first formulated by Freud in his early instinct theory. These early concepts of Freud have recently received strong corroboration from neuro-biological research (Allan Schore and Antonio Damasio) which have emphasised the importance of energetic and somatic processes as central to the understanding of consciousness. Similarly great support for the first instinct theory has come from the new discipline of neuro-psychoanalysis.

In particular the work of Mark Solms and Edward Nersessian has emphasised the energetic aspects of drives, as linked to motoric processes in the body these researches support the central role given in Biosynthesis to psychic energy, affective contact and motoric expression.

The topographical theory of psycho-analysis

Freud’s concept of the id, the ego and the superego introduced a tripartite topology of consciousness. The distinctions of conscious and unconscious are related in Biosynthesis to the concept of implicit and explicit memory. Freud, who had trained with the embryologist Paul Roux, called his tripartite schema a “psychic embryology.” A revised topological theory was developed by the British Object Relations School, in the work of Ronald Fairbain (see below). In Biosynthesis, Freud’s “psychic embryology” is related to the understanding of the morphogenetic organisation of the human body and the three related “lifestreams” of affect, behaviour and cognition. All modern emotion theory supports the understanding of the need for an integration, in healthy functioning, of these three principles, whereas their splitting and dissociation is related to forms of neurosis.

Freud described the ego as having ultimately a somatic basis. Paul Federn developed this somatic ego-psychology further. In Biosynthesis we distinguish motoric and perceptual ego functions. The concept of the superego was further developed in the British Object Relations School by Ronald Fairbairn and its connections with the theory of affects and drives has been well described by David Smith and David Boadella in their contributions to Maps of Character.

The dynamic theory of psycho-analysis

This theory dealt with the concepts of resistance and transference. The concept of resistance in Biosynthesis is supplemented by Sandor Ferenczi’s understanding of the role of muscular tension in resistance and by Wilhelm Reich’s related concept of muscular armouring. The concept of transference is similarly extended to include the concepts of Melanie Klein on projective identification and the concepts of the embodied transference described by Martin Dornes. Transference is understood in Biosynthesis to include processes of somatic resonance and vegetative identification which are forms of entrainment between persons that have been
studied in great detail by the neuro-biologist Allan Schore, who provides extensive psycho-physiological support to the concepts of Biosynthesis.

The theory and practice of character-analysis

The psycho-analytical understanding of character was first developed, on bases outlined by Freud, by Karl Abraham. The resulting characterology was further refined and developed by Wilhelm Reich, in the Technical Seminars which he led for the Austrian Psychoanalytical Association in Vienna, between 1924 and 1930. Reich’s seminars on characterology were attended by Anna Freud whose book The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence explores further some aspects of the concepts of character structure. Working closely with Reich was Otto Fenichel, a principle psycho-analytical theoretician in Vienna. After 1930 Reich and Fenichel moved to Berlin where Karen Horney, an analysand of Karl Abraham, attended the seminars on character. Karen Horney moved to America and became a prominent neo-Freudian. When Hitler came to power, Reich and Fenichel moved to Norway at the invitation of Harold Schjelderup, professor of psychology at Oslo University, and of Ola Raknes, a member of the Berlin Psychoanalytical Institute and of the Scandinavian Psychoanalytical Association. At the 13th International Psychoanalytic Congress in Lucerne, in 1934, Reich extended his character-analytic concepts to the understanding of affective energies in the vegetative nervous system and of the related muscular and respiratory tensions. His extended method he called after this “character-analytic vegetotherapy”; and this tradition was further developed by Trygve Braatoy, author of a classic book on psycho-analytical theory and by Dr. Nic Waal, an associate of the Menninger Clinic, who was director of the Institute of Psychiatry at Oslo University, as well as by Dr. Ola Raknes, who trained David Boadella.

Analytical posturology and clinical movement therapy

Independently of Reich, Felix Deutsch made connections between character process and movement patterns. He called his work “analytical posturology.” Deutsch was a strong influence on the Hungarian psycho-analyst Bela Mittelman, who carried this work further. The American psycho-analyst Judith Kestenberg took their principles and developed them to what she had learned about expressive movement from the Hungarian movement specialist Rudolf Laban. Kestenberg related movement expressions of her clients to affective and drive states as understood in psycho-analysis and to character expressions as understood in analytical posturology. This was one of the roots of clinical movement therapy using depth-psychological principles. This tradition passed into Biosynthesis from four sources: Elsa Lindenberg, the second wife of Wilhelm Reich, a trainee of Laban’s; Diana Jordan, a British trainee of Rudolf Laban, the clinical movement teacher of David Boadella; Liljan Espenak, a Hungarian trainee of Laban who also collaborated with Ola Raknes; and the Japanese movement teacher, Kazuo Ohno who creatively applied many principles of Laban in his work. Silvia Specht Boadella studied both with Elsa Lindenberg and with Kazuo Ohno and applied what she learned of movement therapy principles in a depth-psychological context, in the Biosynthesis Trainings.

Body-image and body-schema research

The Viennese Psychology Professor Paul Schilder, who was a teacher of Wilhelm Reich, developed the first psycho-dynamic and depth-psychological theory of the body-image. He was influenced indirectly by the work of Pierre Janet and by the work of Henri Bergson on motoric memory. Schilder’s insights were to become the mainstay of body-oriented psychotherapy, which influenced a number of psycho-analysts in the direction of more awareness of the role of the body in imagery and in consciousness. Schilder influenced Maurice Merleau Ponty in his concept of the habitual body. Later researches in this area demonstrated the importance of the body-schema as a process underlying the body-image. In Biosynthesis we work sometimes from the body-image to the body-schema and sometimes from the body-schema to the body-image. We use both of these to influence changes in the psycho-dynamic structure of the client.

Psycho-somatic therapy

Georg Groddeck, in Berlin, is often considered to be the father of German psycho-somatic medicine. He developed the concept of the „id“, which Freud used in his topology of consciousness. However, Groddeck’s
The early psycho-analytical insights into affect and drive, which lay the basis for the understanding of psychic energy, was followed by the understanding that affect occurred principally in relationship to others, and that human energies were not only intra-personal but to a major degree inter-personal. The bases of relational psycho-dynamics were greatly carried forwards by the Hungarian psycho-analyst Sandor Ferenczi, and, through Ferenczi, an important influence on Wilhelm Reich. Groddeck worked with the symbolic aspect of bodily processes and also directly with muscle tensions and with breathing patterns in his client and presented his work at the congress of the Deutsche Kollegium für Psychosomatische Medizin, in Dresden, in 1931.

A second form of psycho-somatic medicine, working more with classical principles of interpretation, was developed by the Freudian Franz Alexander. This tradition was continued in America by Flanders Dunbar, a prominent psycho-analyst. Dunbar was married to Theodore Wolfe, a specialist in psycho-somatic medicine, who became a close colleague of Wilhelm Reich once Reich moved to America.

The Deutsche Collegiums für Psycho-somatische Medizin contains many prominent doctors and psychotherapists, associated with the name of Thure Von Uexküll, who have continued the depth-psychological understanding of the relationship between psyche and soma down to this day. Von Uexküll was influenced by Viktor von Weizsäcker, in the tradition of Grodeck, and has opened his understanding to what he calls “subjective anatomy” and to the methods of body-oriented psychotherapy. Essential literature from Biosynthesis is included among his references and Von Uexküll has explicitly supported Biosynthesis as a psychotherapy form which embodies many of the principles he had developed.

Otto Rank, as a member of Freud’s inner circle, focussed his attention on the depth-psychological understanding of pre-verbal states and in particular of pre- and peri-natal states. He understood, as did also Pierre Janet, that the formation of the personality pre-dates birth and that early non-verbal experiences can be recaptured in later life. The psycho-dynamic understanding of the importance of the period for later personality development was further developed by psycho-analysts such as Sadger, Phyllis Greenacre, Rank’s hungarian trainee Nandor Fodor, by the British psycho-analyst Francis Mott, who was a pupil of Nandor Fodor, and by the psychiatrist Frank Lake who was strongly influenced by the work of Mott. More recent work in this area has been carried out by the Italian psychoanalyst, Piontelli.

Lake was a close colleague of David Boadella in London in the early seventies. Biosynthesis works strongly with the understanding of the depth-psychological importance of this early period before birth and includes methods of working with this period, both symbolically and through body-oriented methods.

Neonatal research

One of the first psycho-analysts to study infant development at close hand was Wilhelm Reich, who set up an infant research clinic, in the USA, in 1950. Reich emphasised the importance for later psycho-dynamic development of the early contact between mother and infant, in the form of touch interactions, eye contact and the creation of empathic bonding. In the same year John Bowlby, a British psychiatrist, prepared for the World Health Organisation his report on “Maternal Welfare and Child Health.” Bowlby had been very influenced by the work of Ian Suttie and of Michael Balint.

Bowlby’s work focussed on the processes of attachment between mother and child and how personality development arose from this. He described four principal varieties of attachment, which are one of the bases of the Biosynthesis understanding of empathy. Bowlby’s attachment theory was carried further in relation to delinquent and maladjusted children by the Scottish psychologist, Donald Stott. David Boadella completed his Master’s Degree in clinical research based on the work of Bowlby and Stott, in 1960.

The study of parent-infant patterns was carried further in researches by Paul and Jean Ritter at the Peer Institute in Nottingham, based on the psycho-dynamic insights of Ian Suttie, and on the energetic insights in the infancy research of Wilhelm Reich. Biosynthesis includes many of these principles in its understanding of human development, since David Boadella was a co-worker at the Peer Institute between 1954 and 1963.

Following the early insights of Suttie and Bowlby, Margaret Mahler and Daniel Stern, Allan Schore and others have promoted the second wave of infancy researches which confirm many important depth-psychological principles. In particular from this second wave of infancy research has come the understanding of “affect-motoric schemas” of contact in early development, and this research confirms the early understanding in Biosynthesis of motoric fields of expression and experience, which are related to the development of the body schema, and to our emotional communications in relationship.

Developmental psycho-dynamics

The early psycho-analytical insights into affect and drive, which lay the basis for the understanding of psychic energy, was followed by the understanding that affect occurred principally in relationship to others, and that human energies were not only intra-personal but to a major degree inter-personal. The bases of relational psycho-dynamics were greatly carried forwards by the Hungarian psycho-analyst Sandor Ferenczi, from within
Freud’s inner circle, when he emphasised the primacy of the mother-child relationship in affecting mental health or unhealth and the importance of the therapeutic work providing a corrective emotional experience and not just an interpretation of what had gone wrong. Ferenczi and Otto Rank together can be seen, in their collaboration in the mid nineteen-twenties, as the founders of “object relations.”

Ferenczi’s work was translated into English by the wife of Ian Suttie, a prominent British psychologist, who wrote his own book, “The Origins of Love and Hate.” These relational insights were carried forward further in the work of the Scottish psycho-analyst Ronald Fairbairn, and his colleague and student Harry Guntrip, who together laid the bases of British Object Relations theory and in particular of the in-depth study of the schizoid personality, who retreats from relationships into his inner world. They in turn influenced strongly Donald Winnicott, a child psychiatrist, who also pioneered some aspects of body-oriented understanding of psycho-dynamic process. Winnicott and Bowlby became close colleagues and worked at the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations in London. It was at the Tavistock Institute, the headquarters of British Object Relations Theory, that David Boadella was invited to present the inter-personal theory of character-structure, as developed within Biosynthesis, in 1973.

References


Biography

David Boadella (born 1931), B.A., M.Ed., D.Sc.hon, Psychotherapist SPV, UKCP and ECP. Studied education, literature and psychology. Trained in character- analytic vegetotherapy. Founder of Biosynthesis. He has spent many years in psychotherapeutic practice. He holds lectures worldwide, and is the author of numerous books and articles. He has been publishing the journal “Energy & Character” since 1970. In 1995 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the “Open International University of Complementary Medicine”. A selection of David Boadella’s books: “Befreite Lebensenergie / Lifestreams” (Kösel / Routledge), “Wilhelm Reich: The evolution of his work” (Archana).

Silvia Specht Boadella (born 1948), Ph.D., Psychotherapist SPV and ECP. Studied philosophy, literature, art history and psychology. Trained in Biosynthesis. Since 1985 she has undergone ongoing further training in “Psychosomatic Centering” (Robert Moore, Denmark). She spent four years lecturing at the University of Kanazawa (Japan). There she dealt intensively with Zen Buddhism and trained in Buto dance with Kazuo Ohno. Since 1985 she has had a psychotherapeutic practice for individual and group therapy. Since 1986 she has been a Biosynthesis trainer at an international level and director of the IIBS. She has published a book: “Erinnerung als Veränderung” (Memory as Change) (Mänder).

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