
BODY THERAPY and JUNGIAN ANALYSIS

A New Approach to Biodynamic Psychotherapy

by

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Introduction

In the past Biodynamic Psychotherapy has mostly been known as a form of bodytherapy. Bodytherapy, insofar as it is an offspring of Wilhelm Reich's work, bases its analytical aspects on Freudian thought. But what happens when bodytherapy meets and amalgamates with Jungian Analysis without foregoing its Freudian inheritance?

In our practice of Biodynamic Psychotherapy, we attempt to do just that. In fact, the unity of our work came to grow out of synthesizing the work of three men and one woman who each in their turn concentrated on different dimensions of being human. The three men are Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Reich and Carl Gustav Jung and the woman is Gerda Boyesen.

Sigmund Freud

At the end of the previous century with its rationalistic, positivistic and materialistic attitude, it is to his credit that Freud discovered and realized the importance of the unconscious. In the last decades of

the 19th century, his study of hysterical symptoms lead him to discover a relationship between psychic illness and emotional energy. *"It was found that if the childhood memories that underly the hysteria could be remembered with emotion, the hysterical symptoms will disappear"*. (1) Freud states his belief that *"the symptoms represented an abnormal form of discharge for quantities of excitation which had not been disposed of otherwise"*. (2) The Freudian concept of this emotional energy is dynamic. It is *"something which is capable of increase, decrease, displacement and discharge, and which extends itself over the memory traces of an idea like an electric charge over the surface of the body. We can apply this hypothesis . . . in the same sense as the physicist employs the conception of a fluid electric current"*. (3)

Corresponding to the most deeply repressed area in Freud's time, the sources of hysterical disturbance are seen as sexual. Freud then studies anxiety neuroses and discovers an even more obvious

relationship to sexual experience. He writes, *"It is possible to demonstrate that every such wave of the neurosis is traceable to a coitus lacking in satisfaction"*. (4) When Freud proceeds to define sexuality as including all libidinous sensations, the foundations of the libido theory are laid.

In 1919 Freud and Reich meet. Freud then distances himself more and more from the libido theory but for Reich it becomes the "living nerve" of psychoanalysis. Freud's further development can be described as a "psychology of ideas" (5). Wilhelm Reich in his turn adheres to the earlier psychoanalytic theory of the sexual source of all neuroses and also extends his work into the area of physical energy research.

Wilhelm Reich

In 1923, Reich coins the term *"orgastic potency"* defined as *"capacity for surrender to the flow of biological energy without any inhibition, the capacity for complete discharge of all dammed-up sexual excitation through involuntary pleasurable contractions of the body"*. (6) He discovers fear as the psychic counterpart of every neurosis and comes to see the opposites of fear and pleasure energetically as stasis and discharge, physically as tension and release.

A year later Reich develops the concept of character armour, a translation of the Freudian character types into a system of body structure and chronic muscular tension. In 1929 this leads him to

formulate his therapeutic goal: the self-regulated, un-armoured, genital character, as opposed to the neurotic character caught in its bodily defence mechanisms.

Reich goes on to create a body-oriented therapy based on his discoveries; he calls it vegetotherapy. *"The principal method of vegetotherapy consists in the disturbance of involuntary (hence unconscious) attitudes. Conversely, in vegetotherapy it is the 'not-talking' - the elimination of conscious intensive oral expression - which is one of the principal methods for bringing to the fore vegetative feelings and affects, rooted in organic processes, before they become conscious"*. (9)

Forced to emigrate to Norway, Reich works on biological pulsation of energy, does skin research and experiments with body energy. This leads to the discovery of an up-to-then scientifically unclassified energy which he calls orgone-energy. It is defined as *"basic cosmic energy; universally present, it can be demonstrated visually, thermally, with the electroscope and the Geiger-Müller counter"*. (10)

Following this, he engages in cancer-research, the psychosomatic causes of cancer. In the 1940's these findings are developed into orgone-therapy.

Gerda Boyesen

Just like Wilhelm Reich, Gerda Boyesen returns to Freud's question of the organismic basis of neurosis. Reich had looked for the organismic basis of the libido - the energy of the

drives - and had found it in the orgone. Boyesen now discovers that the Freudian **id** physically corresponds with the intestines which are under the influence of the autonomous nervous system. The ego finds its equivalent in the diaphragm, whereby we regulate the instinctual impulses rising from the intestines. The alimentary canal, therefore, is called the id-canal since according to Biodynamic hypothesis it is the carrier of welling-up id-impulses.

The psychosomatic process of instinctual repression is dealt with in some of the articles in Boyesen's *"Collected Papers" (11)*. Here she explains that the physiological process of intestinal digestion corresponds with an emotional - psychological - digestion which she calls psychoperistalsis. This peristalsis of the psyche is vegetative, possessing a potential to solve tensions and digest emotions. It is thus essential for the self-regulation and self-healing of the organism. If the intestinal area is chronically tensed-up - which Boyesen calls visceral armouring - the self-healing mechanism of psychoperistalsis cannot function. The armouring in turn is the physical result of unconscious id-conflicts and, respectively, their repression.

The basic psychotherapeutic hypothesis of traditional Biodynamic Psychology then is: gradual dissolving of the visceral armour leads to a solution of unconscious conflicts. A functioning psychoperistalsis is therefore indicative of a healthy psyche.

Wilhem Reich's body-therapeutic work with its emphasis on skeletal muscles, the so-called muscle or character armour, is here being expanded while the focus of interest is directed further into the body.

Reich's genital character, the armour-free human being grounded in his sexuality, in traditional Biodynamic Psychology becomes the primary personality, the human being at home with his instinctual feelings.

Carl Gustav Jung

Following this brief outline of Reich's and Boyesen's concepts, we now take a step backwards in time and turn to Carl Gustav Jung. To begin with, it may be interesting to recall that Freud was about twenty years older than Jung, who in turn was about twenty years older than Reich. One could therefore say that we are dealing with three different generations of psychologies.

After Freud's and Jung's meeting in 1906, their relationship lasts for about six years. From the beginning there are differences, mainly concerning the importance of sexuality in the analytical concept, which in time leads to a parting of the ways. In Freudian thought, the Oedipus complex for example - the desire of the infant for incestuous union with the parent of the opposite sex - plays an important role; but Freud limits its understanding to the personal. In contrast, for Jung the personal is the starting point only for bridging the individual with the transpersonal. He writes: *"To me, incest signified a personal*

complication only in the rarest cases. Usually incest has a highly religious aspect, for which reason the incest theme plays a decisive part in almost all cosmogonies and in numerous myths. But Freud clung to the literal interpretation of it and could not grasp the spiritual significance of incest as a symbol." (12)

Similarly in his attitude towards the symbols of the unconscious, Jung significantly differs from Freud. In *"The Interpretation of Dreams"*, the latter writes in 1899, *"All elongated objects, sticks, tree-trunks, umbrellas . . . , all sharp and elongated weapons, knives, daggers, and pikes, represent the male member - Small boxes, chests, cupboards, and ovens correspond to the female organ; also cavities, ships and all kinds of vessels."* (13) - (Accordingly, Reich later writes, *"The goal of all man's mysticism is the vagina"*). (14)

Contrary to that, Jung implies that he sees the penis itself as a symbol too (15), meaning that for him the interpretation of a symbol does not, by a long way, end there. Again and again he stresses that no complete interpretation of any symbol is possible because it always encompasses more than consciousness can grasp.

Freud's attitude towards the unconscious, it seems reasonable to say, is that of a conqueror colonizing a foreign country and calling her inhabitants *"barbaric"* (16). For Jung, the unconscious is the autonomous primary foundation of the self. About the dream - for him the prime manifestation of the

unconscious - he writes: *"The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the soul, opening into that cosmic night which was the psyche long before there was any ego-consciousness, and which will remain psyche no matter how far our ego consciousness extends"*. (17)

Similarly creative is Jung's concept of what he calls *"the shadow"*, *"the inferior part of the personality; sum of all personal and collective psychic elements which, because of their incompatibility with the chosen conscious attitude, are denied expression in life . . . The shadow behaves compensatorily to consciousness; hence its effects can be positive as well as negative"*. (18) - This brings to mind the Hebrew saying, *"Know your enemy well - for that is what you will become"*.

Whereas Freud mainly works with the personal unconscious, Jung's work reaches into what he himself calls *"the collective unconscious"*: *"over and above . . . (the personal unconscious) we also find in the unconscious qualities that are not individually acquired but are inherited, e.g. instincts as impulses to carry out actions from necessity, without conscious motivation. In this 'deeper' stratum, we also find the . . . archetypes . . . The instincts and archetypes together form the collective unconscious. I call it 'collective' because, unlike the personal unconscious, it is not made up of individual and more or less unique contents but of those which are universal and of regular occurrence"*. (19)

"Archetype" Jung calls the irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of . . . the psyche".(20) It *"might perhaps be compared to the axial system of a crystal, which, as it were, preforms the crystalline structure in the mother liquid, although it has no material existence of its own"*.(21)

Jung traces the collective unconscious in fairytales, myths, legends and especially alchemy. These realms are of particular importance for us because they concern themselves with **our** own European tradition - in contrast to exotic concepts imported from far-away cultures.

In 1926 a dream directs Jung towards the importance of alchemy (22). He follows this pointer and, right up to his death in 1961, alchemy remains a central focus of his work. Jung's significant discovery lies in the observation that the imagery of the unconscious contents bears a striking resemblance to the work of the alchemists of old. *"Typically for . . . (their) language is the symbolic image and the paradox. Both correspond to the inconceivable nature of life and the unconscious psyche"*.(23)

The goal of the alchemist opus is the paradoxical union of opposite forces. This is called *"hieros gamos"*- holy matrimony -, the *"mysterium coniunctionis"* - the mystery of conjunction -, the title of Jung's final major work. (24) For him, this mirrors the individuation process, path and goal of Jungian analytical work.

Biodynamic Psychology The Traditional Approach

Here the therapeutic arrangement often has the client lying down with eyes closed for a vegetotherapy or massage session. It may thus be suggested that traditional Biodynamic psychotherapy creates a regressive environment where the therapist takes over the client's adult aspects, especially the super-ego. Frequently the client leaves the session in this regressed state, finding it difficult to adapt to daily life outside of the therapeutic environment. In her theoretical writings Gerda Boyesen repeatedly uses the term *"organism"* when referring to her clients, which can be seen as a characteristic reduction of the adult self.

One may conclude that in the last analysis, the traditional Boyesen approach concerns itself with the individual being driven out of the infantile paradise to which it implicitly promises to return its clients. As a theoretical concept, the primary personality describes such a paradise: the world of the streamings, the oceanic, and alpha-brainwaves. From an analytical perspective, traditional Biodynamics remain contained in the uroboros (the snake biting its own tail), the realm of the Great Mother, particularly in her nourishing and healing aspects. This implies remaining unconscious; male and female are yet undifferentiated. Thus neither an adult sexuality seems possible- as deemed centrally important by Reich - nor does the psychic dynamic which for Jung is inherent in the relationship of the

sexes. He said, "**There is no energy without opposites**".(25) (Our emphasis)

In terms of the therapeutic relationship, to remain contained in the Great Mother means that transference and especially counter-transference phenomena must be regarded as non-existent. Consequently, of course, they cannot be dealt with within the framework of traditional Biodynamic Psychology.

Equally left out of consideration is the realm of the dark, the personal shadow which plays such an eminent role in Analytical Psychology. Although the so-called secondary personality - individually differing forms of armouring and their effects - does exist in the Boyesen-approach, the therapeutic goal lies in dissolving the secondary personality and in getting rid of it in the course of the therapy. A dialogue between shadow and conscious ego, which would constitute a dynamic in the literal sense, cannot take place within the traditional Biodynamic frame of reference. Thus a process of conscious integration of the shadow aspects is prevented. From an analytical point of view the shadow has to remain split-off. But splitting is the opposite of healing, becoming whole.

In short, the merit of the traditional approach lies chiefly in the realm of the body and physical well-being.

Towards a New Approach

At this point it is possible to take up the threads from where we began.

Freud, Reich with Boyesen, and Jung, each emphasize a different dimension of the human experience which then becomes split into mind, body and soul. Each of these concepts chiefly pertains to one dimension. Concentrating on rational explanation, interpretation and consciousness in Psychoanalysis, Freud places his emphasis on the mind. Vegetotherapy and traditional Biodynamics deal with the body and its energy circulation. Jung's Analytical Psychology concerns itself with the process of soul-making.

Body, mind and soul being one, we suggest that it is possible to synthesize these three approaches. In our work, we aim to arrive at a three-dimensional structure enabling us to focus on either dimension. Synthesis here is not eclectic but the creation of something new.

To concretize this idea, more explanation is needed. Firstly, we see Biodynamic Psychotherapy as therapeutic work with the unconscious. The term unconscious is understood in the Jungian sense as a creative autonomous entity which reaches from the personal contents, across the shadow, down to the collective roots. Secondly, the personal unconscious in our view is influenced by early childhood experience and family structure.

The Biodynamic therapist does not only speak the dream-language of the unconscious in its imagery and symbolic character, but also understands for example its body-language - the body as mouthpiece and creative means of unconscious

expression. If need be, they can resonate directly to the body's expression, without recurring to the filter of spoken language. Furthermore, they pay attention to the everyday-language of the unconscious and are aware that the unconscious can materialize and express itself in everyday events even to the extremes of accidents and illness, including meaningful coincidence - Jung's synchronicity. With Freud, the Biodynamic therapist understands the unconscious contents of verbal association and slips of the tongue. Perhaps the most difficult language to learn is an understanding of how the unconscious uses the medium of transference and countertransference.

To prevent a misunderstanding of this analogy from the realm of language, it must be stressed that the Biodynamic therapist has a wide range of choice in dealing with material thus presented - associative-assimilatively using the right-brain hemisphere, analytical-reductively by way of activating the left-brain hemisphere, or non-verbally with a gesture or a touch. Listening to the unconscious then, implies developing a "third ear" for the different languages, their rhythm, their sound and their modulation, as well as a sharp eye for the expressions of the body.

Is it possible to describe a "typical" session? With us it mostly begins verbally, therapist and client sitting opposite each other on chairs. The dialogue may develop and deepen and slowly crystallize around a nucleus, the theme of the session. Based on my therapeutic understanding and intuition, I

possibly suggest to my client that he or she explore their theme bodily, guided by spontaneous movements. Or it may seem appropriate to invite emotional expression by certain breathing techniques. If the theme is coloured by early childhood material, I would offer my client the possibility of lying down with eyes closed. If the theme seems to be worked through sufficiently, or, if a deepening in the described way seems too painful or filled with anxiety, the whole session may proceed verbally. The character of a session may reach from calm and contemplative to loud and abreactive; it may be introverted or extroverted.

Sharp observation and meticulous listening are important instruments of our work. This means for example that we become aware when expression is lacking emotion, or notice unconscious body-expression in posture and movement. Gradually we induce the client to move from conscious to unconscious territory, from the known to the unknown. The involuntary indications of the non-integrated, incompleteness and incongruities in expression, indicate something unfinished. We try to connect these incidents with what is already known. In the bodywork we may invite our client to allow a movement to become stronger, to demonstrate or perform verbalized situations and poses from the depth of the body.

The method we choose and the dimension we enter - body, mind or soul - is oriented towards the search for meaning. This is the basis of our work. Accordingly, we try to avoid meaningless acting-out.

A central focus of our work is the male/female polarity. Individually this is not only striving to come to terms with anima and animus - the respective contrasexual part within - but also encountering the other sex: heterosexuality and homosexuality. The goal of this process is a union, in and through differentiation. An alchemist rule says: *"Only what has been properly separated can be adequately joined."*

As therapists we work from our gender-identification as man and woman. This implies a limitation of which we are conscious. For male as well as female clients there are basic gender-specific areas which can only be adequately worked through with a therapist of one's own sex. For this reason we change the leadership in our groupwork periodically and in individual work we suggest a change to the client when this seems advisable.

This does not imply a one-sided pursuit of stereotypes. For each of us in the therapeutic work the midwifely attitude of the Great Mother is complemented by an attitude which archetypally stems from the Great Father.

The Great Father is a term which - contrary to that of the Great Mother - is still quite rare in psychology. It is the primal image, the archetype of the masculine, from which all other forms of male being originate. Illustrated by the image of the nature-god Pan, it is a spectrum which reaches from the friendly old man playing the pan-flute to the goat-headed monster from whose name rightfully originates the term panic.

Conclusion

Just as this union, in and through differentiation, characterizes our work, it also points towards the goal. Biodynamic Psychotherapy for us is a road to individual self-realization in deeply experienced masculinity and femininity. The social equivalents of this are to be found in society: in politics, culture, church and religion. Here though, the feminine is under-represented, it is so to speak collectively repressed. Viewed historically, there is a grave imbalance between the masculine and the feminine: each imprisons the other. In the conscious and the outer world, the masculine element predominates and becomes one-sided and destructive through the missing feminine pole. The same happens in the unconscious with the feminine exiles there. The repressed goddess - in mythological imagery - has become angry and bitter. Thus neglected, she becomes the unconscious ruler and, as Medusa, keeps men and women in invisible chains. *"The dream of reason brings forth monsters". (Goya) (26)*

Medusa's feminine rage in the inner realms equals the male destructiveness of the atom bomb in the outer world. Symbolically, a giant image of the snake-curled head of the Medusa can be seen in the nuclear explosion's mushroom cloud. We hope possibly to contribute to the healing of this neurotic balance in the collective. In order not to fall victim to the nuclear fusion in the outer reality, we work inner-psychically on the harmonic fusion of the masculine with the feminine.

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