

Jean Ambrosi

# Essential Movement Therapy

*'I do not restrict in any way the meaning in my use of the word 'exorcist'. It concerns individuals who remove or pretends to remove the devil from other people. And among the exorcists there are the therapists, although few of them are aware of this side'.*

Essential - Movement Therapy (E.M.T.) is an original therapeutic approach. It draws upon new notions in neuro-physiology, in embryology, in articular physiology and osteopathy to establish its theoretical context.

Its clinical aspect is influenced by Fritz Perls (with particular emphasis on the sensation 'here and now', by the study of natural cycles (from the law of Five Elements) . . . . and results in an original therapeutic process: "the work on movement".

E.M.T. expounds an autonomous theory of psychic activity.

The training of an E.M.T. therapist includes, in addition to a direct personal experience of E.M.T., an introduction to disciplines previously considered as separate from psychotherapy.

Pain of all forms (and F. Perls clearly demonstrated how 'moral', 'mental' or 'behavioural' pain is also a physical sensation) proceeds from a refusal by the person - an unconscious refusal in most cases - to allow the tension or dynamic qualities of the pain to develop. The person 'holds back'.

I agree with 'the exorcist's' objective of restoring its dynamic qualities into energy, (I call the dynamic content of tension or pain 'biological energy') but our opinions differ as to the destination of this energy.

For example, the exorcist will respond to a stomach pain with an action which results in the circulation of energy from the painful area to the ground. He/she can achieve their results by suggesting stress positions. In certain cases the ailment can disappear very quickly, but the disappearance is temporary because the exorcist does not get to the root of the problem as they sometimes pretend to do. They presume the presence of a 'devil' with whatever diagnostic is used to point it out. And the exorcist deduces a succession of acts to make the devil leave.

In the occidental world, for two thousand years, from the therapists of the christian era up until the body therapists, our contemporaries, we have worked, aware or not, on the basis of the expulsion of the devil for what we feel to be 'the saving of the spirit'. Of course we use other words.

E.M.T. depends on a different economy. . . . We encourage and work for an internal conservation and internal mutation of this energy.

### ***A Case Study***

The case concerns a woman, Frances. She came to visit because she was 'depressed'. She experienced chronic pain in the upper part of the chest and had feared all sorts of illnesses, all very serious. She had consulted many specialists who had reassured her that her fears were not justified. We had begun a verbal therapy but there had been no change in the pain or the behaviour.

One day she related a dream and the pain intensified. I immediately tried a first 'exorcism' inspired by what is known as bio-energy analysis. Then a second one borrowed from Gestalt therapy. Each time there occurred temporary alleviation which was followed by an intense pain. Instead of releasing the dynamic qualities of the held back energy and bringing it out, I was achieving the opposite. I had encountered my limit as an exorcist.

That is when I had the intuition to ask Frances to 'physically close in on her pain', to find a position with her body that would surround the pain. She did so. She inclined the upper part of her chest, and crossed her chest with her arms. She signalled to me that the pain's intensity increased. I suggested that she tighten up a little more. She appeared apprehensive but did as I suggested. After two or three minutes she said she felt pain in the neck but none in the chest. I then made the same suggestion, that she find a position with her body which would slightly intensify the neck pain. She was contented with lowering her head a little. The neck pain turned into a sensation of heat which she found pleasant. And again I suggested the same action: to find a position with her body, which she did, thereby intensifying this agreeable sensation of heat; a more encompassing heat sensation then occurred in the back and other areas.

An internal dynamic had found its path from the chronic pain of the upper chest, and Frances' therapy consisted mainly of encouraging this dynamic. It was resumed each time depending on what Frances felt 'here and now'. The first symptom disappeared and Frances' condition progressively improved.

We now call this whole development of successive positions which enclose the sensation, the held back energy, and which paradoxically confer to this energy its dynamic quality, 'movement'.

This case, amongst others, contributed to the recognition of the role of the exorcist, to its being questioned and to the progressive development of what is now E.M.T.

### **The Theoretical Framework**

E.M.T. implies an original theoretical framework.

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Psycho-analysis is a particular manner of exorcism (the psycho analyst tries to create a gulf of silence into which the devil will fall, led by the patient's discourse. And psycho-analysis goes even further by building a real demonology with steps the devil must respect and which define its path. Psycho-analysis guarantees only one way out for the devil, and only one possibility for the patient to 'free' her or himself, since the word 'cure' is taboo.) The theoretical foundations of psycho-analysis, which I call a metapsychology, can be adapted more or less successfully to the other forms of exorcism. The prestige of psychoanalysis is due to these adaptations and many of 'the new therapies' are somatic variations of psycho-analysis.

If metapsychology can act as a theoretical framework for the majority of forms of exorcism, it can no longer do the same for therapies which refute its fundamental attitude. Therefore metapsychology cannot be used to defend E.M.T. At first this statement seemed very awkward. It forced us to do some hard theoretical work. We have now arrived at a simple concept of psychic activity.

The description of Frances' case demonstrates a certain movement which derives its dynamic from the different body positions which tend to enclose the sensation. These sensations are called 'messages'. The articulation between the message and the movement infers a beginning of a theory of psychic activity. Physiology tells us of mechanisms which allow feeling, the message, from a stimulus. It does not reveal any of the message's deep origins, of the underlying psychic meaning. To facilitate communication we call this origin A. And we designate B the psychic symptom with the ability, whether used or not, to respond to the messages originating at the objective of the theoretical work which supports E.M.T. is to establish the different laws which govern the dialogue between A and B.

From "*The Exorcist in Question*" by Jean Ambrosi 1979.

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**Donald Ellison**

## **Following in the Hero's Footsteps**

On reading Paul Rebillot's contribution to Vol. VII No. 4 of *Self and Society*, entitled *The Hero's Journey*, I found myself wondering who this hero is and what the itinerary of his journey.

We are told that the hero is "someone who hears the call to adventure and