

**Note: "Energy continua" is the phenomenon that connective tissue is a semi-conductor of all the bioenergies: heat, luminescence, sound, electricity etc.**

**FA - Functional Analysis**

**CT - Connective tissue**

### **The Matrix as a Paradigm Shift in Touch Therapies**

The understanding of a matrix creates a paradigm shift in any therapy approach that works with the body. As mentioned, there has been a tendency in the body oriented therapies to think of touching the body as only physical and local, e.g., Myers's "Rolfing Heaven", following simple mechanical laws of leverage, pressure, compression, etc. The last 30 years of research have revealed that it is not as simple as that, even to the point whereby, on the microscopic level, Guimberteau declared: "...a tangle of threads; total fibrillar chaos" (Guimberteau, 2018, p. 63). Yet, Guimberteau observed that, even without the traditional linear cause and effect mechanisms in place, efficiency and chaos seem to go hand in hand.

Although we might initially expect that fibrillar architecture would obey the laws of classical Newtonian physics, [gravity] in practice we also encounter non-linear behaviors at all levels, which can be explained only by non-Newtonian physics and fractal geometry. Nothing is regular, but there must be an underlying logic to the irregular arrangement of these anatomical structures, and so we are faced with the difficult but essential questions about how living matter is organized. (Guimberteau, 2018, p. 117)

The same can be said about the underlying logic of psychic structures, even in dysfunction: denial, disassociation, resistance etc.. They seem to make no sense, they work against the person's efforts to live a satisfying life, yet as Reich maintained, there is a logic to it all. As already mentioned, since each is an individual, we must evaluate him from his own point of view. (Reich, 1967, p. 463) This is the functional model of Reich: an underlying force at work that brings living matter into organized, efficient states depending on local demands even in dysfunction. There is a "logic" to how the body functions: it is stable, yet adaptable, maintaining coherence through time and movement. But it needs to be understood in a new manner. A matrix model offers just such a new logical approach to how the body functions.

With a matrix model it is understood that when one palpates or manipulates any part of the body, the effects are not limited to the specific region of the body worked on. "There are no local problems, there are no local treatments" (Oschman, in Schleip et al. 2012, p. 104). In discussing postural patterns, Myers emphasized that you should work with the whole system. "Expressed in the negative, failing to include such global considerations in local treatment will leave the tendency for the patient to return to the patterns that led to the segmental failure in the first place" (Myers, in Schleip et al., 2012, p.135). One reason for this is, as Van den Berg highlighted, that changes in the CT (connective tissue) due to injury are not limited to the specific area affected. "Our whole body physiology changes as a result of pain" (Van den Berg, in Schleip et al., 2012, p. 149). Here is the unique value of Reich's work for psychotherapy. If "global considerations" are not included, the PES axis, (Psychic/Emotional/Somatic axis) the old patterns will return. As Oschman emphasized earlier, no amount of understanding, logic and interpretation will change these patterns. Reich's work was based on the biological and on how it affected the psychological. Most psychotherapies do not include the biological, and those that do, come at it from the other direction: how the psychological affects the biological such as in psychosomatic approaches. It remains a linear, top-down model.

It is also understood that the region chosen to be worked on, because of a dysfunction or pain at a specific location, may not be the source of the problem as in referred pain. The same model fits for psychotherapy. I refer the reader back to the image mentioned earlier from Rolf, whereby if one tugs at the bottom of a sweater, the tension lines can be seen spreading upwards through other parts of the sweater. The pain may be at a distance from the initial tension site. Pischinger (in Oschman, 2000) explained how this is possible. "... the fascial system as the largest system in the body, as it is the only system that touches all the other systems" (Oschman, 2000, p.104). With an understanding of Szent-Györgyi's energetic continua, (CT as a conductor of the biological energies) we are never working just physically or only on a specific part of the body. From a FA point

of view, we are also never working only psychologically on the character and its resistances either.

I want to call attention to the fact that a CT matrix model transforms easily into a body psychotherapy model: the therapist begins discussing a theme with the patient, or begins working on specific restrictions in the body, and then ends up finding themselves on a long and winding trail leading them to other places and themes, but not necessarily engaging "global considerations". It can be simply diversion. Transference is a good example. The patient may have a problem with his wife or boss or his therapist, but the problem is really about his early relationship with his father.

In fact, the entire concept of the unconscious is built on the idea, that what we are aware of is limited, which is the reason why we have that particular problem; we don't know what the problem is or where the problem really originates. Everything is connected to everything else and that is both the good and the bad news. The good news is, since everything is connected, we can "trace" it back to its source, if we so wish. The bad news for patients is since everything is connected, no matter how hard we try to deny or avoid it, it doesn't go away; we stay connected to it in some way, despite repression, denial, etc.. From a psychotherapy view, what is called splitting or dissociation seems to be the only way to escape this underlying continuity. This may be effective in its own way, but you can't go "home" again. Below is a diagram of how defense systems work.

**Diagram 6** NOT AVAILABLE

More specifically, in body oriented psychotherapy, we focus on emotions as well as thoughts. In this model, both are information/energetic experiences. But it has become clear over the years in FA, that people typically have emotions *about* an emotion and even emotions about that secondary emotion. To use Reichian terminology, these secondary and tertiary emotions are emotions from the armor, the psychic and physical defenses, whose sole purpose is to *prevent* contact with the deeper emotional states,

the “global considerations”. This is seen in the clinical setting whereby typically, men are more comfortable expressing anger than sadness, being strong and not being weak and crying. When they come to therapy, their theme is anger – understanding it and controlling it, and occasionally wanting to have less of it. But the question is, what is the patient angry about? When delved into – returning to the patterns that led to the segmental failure in the first place – it is usually about some hurt or insult from the past, rejection or indifference from the father for example, whereby if the patient focused on this directly, he would become sad and cry. But big boys don’t cry. Below the anger is the sadness. The sadness has been denied and transformed into anger. What could even be below the sadness about the father’s rejection, is the original love for the father, that is still alive within the patient and was never fully lived. That is sad too. The problem as lived, in this case too much anger, is coming from somewhere else, referred emotion. And in addition, this problem isn’t even anger, it’s (unrequited) love!

This discussion is the psychological version of the Myers quote above: if you do not consider underlying psychic causes for a problem, the therapy will leave the patient with the same underlying patterns and the behavior will return, because the deeper imbalances are still operative. Everything is connected to everything else. The classic example in psychotherapy is that often the patient seemingly understands everything, but nothing really changes. Something deeper has to be altered before a behavior or belief can be abandoned as a result of some reorganization within that pattern/history. Not contained, not diverted, but reorganized and then abandoned. Here is an example of how Reich understood that everything is connected in body and mind and that we need to touch these deeper levels in our psychotherapeutic approaches. He wrote that every time the characterological, muscular armor is dissolved the result is:

...first of all, in the liberation of anger or of anxiety. By treating these liberated affects as also a defense mechanism, we finally succeed in restoring to the patient his sexual motility and biological sensitivity. *In other words, by loosening up character attitudes we are able to bring about reactions in the vegetative system.* (Reich, 1967, p. 266)

A second reason, that a matrix model creates a paradigm shift, is that touch is not limited to specific structural elements. The matrix is an underlying, global, unifying force throughout the body. To my knowledge Szent-Györgyi statement below is the strongest argument against the reductionistic model of science and psychotherapy.

If nature puts two things together she produces something new with new qualities, which cannot be expressed in terms of qualities of the components. When going from electrons and protons, to atoms and from there to molecules, to molecular aggregates, etc., up to the cell or the whole animal, at every level we find something new, a new breathtaking vista. Whenever we separate two things, we lose something, something that may have been the most essential feature. (Szent-Györgyi, in Oschman, 1997, U. p. 8)

Szent-Györgyi's description reflects the concept of synergy from the Greek *Synergia*, working together. "This refers to the behavior of dynamic systems in which combined action is favored over the actions of individual components." (Guimberteau, 2018, p. 127)

A third reason for a paradigm shift is that the understanding of the matrix is not limited to a mere physical/structural level. Oschman emphasized that the study of relationships within a unified system leads to a totally different perspective than the study of a system composed of individual parts. The matrix creates a body wide *energy* system.

One consequence is that the 'system of systems' or the 'living matrix' is not only mechanically interconnected, it is energetically and informationally continuous. Stated simply, the structural framework of the body is simultaneously an energetic and informational framework (Oschman, 1997, p. 8).

As Reich understood, and as, in my view, Myers was suggesting, problems, be they physical, psychological or a combination of the two, are not merely structural as for example: deficient ego development, lack of emotional borders or strained fascial sheets. There is a deeper level that needs to be reorganized, before the patient can change the more superficial, structural deficits or dysfunctions, which in fact are symptoms revealing the underlying imbalances.

How are we to understand Oschman's position that the structural framework of the body is simultaneously an energetic and informational framework? Usually we think of our nervous system when considering information/communication within the body. But looking at evolutionarily earlier life forms, many still alive today, we see that there has been some type of information/communication within these animals, even though they have no nerves whatsoever. "Single celled paramecium hunt living prey, avoid predators, respond to light, sound and smells and engage in complicated movements without a nervous system" (Oschman, in Schleip et al., 2012, p. 103).

Prokaryotes – organisms lacking a cell nucleus or any other membrane bound organelles, even those as simple as flagellated bacteria – are likewise capable of sensing and responding to various environmental stimuli and moving towards and away from them as necessary for their survival. In this historic and evolutionary context, the nervous system is seen as a relatively new "invention" that functions in cooperation with an older communication system that has had a much longer period of evolutionary refinement. (Oschman, 2012, in Schleip et al., p.103)

Reich came to the same conclusion from a psychic orientation. "The living organism functions autonomously, beyond the sphere of language, intellect and volition" (Reich, 1967, p. 403).

A non-neuron based information system is an example of the tropism mentioned earlier. It is commonly known as approach/avoidance and is the most basic life response. The organism is "deciding" what is positive and what is negative for it. It is a qualitative evaluation common to all living systems. It is the basis of life. Reich pointed out in 1942:

"Impulses and sensations are not created by the nerves, but only transmitted by them. They are biological manifestations of the organism as a whole. They are present in the organism long before the development of an organized nervous system." (Reich, 1967, p.255-6)

Impulses and sensations will come up again shortly in terms of "urges".

***Excerpt from the coming book - Chapter 7 The Matrix as a Paradigm Shift in Touch Therapies WILL DAVIS - <http://2020.functionalanalysis.org/>***