

THE JELLYFISH EXERCISES AND THE REICHIAN WORLD OF GERDA BOYESEN¹

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This text is based on the 1993 version, published in *Energy & Character*, and translated in German by Bernard Maul'for *Energie & Charakter*, 9, 1994: 41 - 93. The drawings are from the German edition, which explains why they are in German. I have slightly revised the text, to accommodate it - at least partially - to my present vision, for a workshop I should give in Japan, in October 2008. This is a working document, not designed for publication, as it still has the spelling mistakes that regrettably characterise my writing. (February 2008)

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1. Preface: the function of a jellyfish process in a psychotherapy

“When he has a feeling inside, how is he to know whether he is the only person on earth to have felt it, or even something like it? (Daniel Stern 1990: 106-107)”

After the Second World War, in Oslo, Gerda Boyesen trained in three complementary disciplines²:

1. Clinical psychology, at the University.
2. With Ola Raknes, she trained in Reichian Vegetotherapy and Orgonomy.
3. She also trained with Büllow-Hansen, in psychiatry, to acquire physiotherapeutic massage methods used with Trygve Braatøy's psychoanalytic therapeutic approach.

Gerda Boyesen Biodynamic psychology is a synthesis of her training, and knowledge she acquired. She therefore refused to be labelled as a neo-reichian, because she wanted her synthesis and personal discoveries to be recognized as much as the reichian dimension of her work.

1.1. Enhancing the Impression of having a coherent Self by interacting with others

A person has nervous pathways that carry information on what happens inside her, and nervous pathways that carry information on what happens around her. These relatively independent sources of information form the basis of what Lacan defines as a social I (*le je*) and an intimate I (*le moi*):

1. The *intimate I* of an organism creates self-images using information directly gathered inside the organism.
2. The *interacting I* of an organism creates self-images using information that only others can perceive directly.

A frustrating aspect of such a data management structure, is that it provides no means through which we may gather direct information on how we look, how we smell, what impact we have on others, and how efficient our actions are when we work. All these information have to be constructed with the help of what others tell us, and with the help of such devices as mirrors and cameras.

Let us take the following observation by Daniel Stern, of a five-month-old baby called Joey as an example:

"When an infant can differentiate himself from his mother, and how it is accomplished, has been a heated question in most psychologies for a long time. The notion of an infant who searches for and identifies the invariant parts of experience helps to provide an answer. Imagine three of the possible unchanging (invariant) elements of an arm movement. First, the volition to move the arm is the intention (usually beyond awareness) that precedes the movement and, so to speak, designs it in advance. Second, the muscular feedback comes during (and after) the execution of the planned movement. Third, the infant sees an arm move.

If Joey is acting alone in moving his arm, even in his mother's presence, he will experience the volition, the feedback, and the sight of the motion. That constellation of invariants will begin to define a self- event. If Joey's mother moves her own arm in his presence, he sees an arm movement but experiences no volition and no feedback. Thus, that constellation of invariants begins to define other-person events as against self-events. Finally, if his mother moves Joey's arm for him (as when teaching him to clap his hands), he feels the feedback of his own arm's movements, and sees it move, but does not experi-

² See Heller 2007 for a more detailed account of Gerda Boyesen's training.

ence the volition that usually sets the movements going. This defines yet a third kind of event, the self-with-another." (Stern 1990: 53 - 54)

In this example, there is a single movement: Joey's arm is moving. Volition and feedback are part of what Lacan calls the 'me'... the intimate self. Only Joey can feel it, and even the great specialist of children Daniel Stern does not know (cannot know) how these sensations are experienced by Joey. Joey's hand movement is also part of the interacting I. His eyes can see it... a bit in the same way that his mother's eyes can see it. This element of Joey's movement is similar to his vision of his mother moving an arm. However, he will never know how his mother experiences this movement. Joey has thus at least two ways of perceiving his arms:

1. An arm felt from the inside, he feels as his. This arm is really a bunch of independent sensations that do not always add to a representation of Joey's moving arm.
2. An arm he can see but nor really feel, an arm which is his as a toy is his, but which he can difficulty assimilate with his intimate I.

Lacan has shown how deeply this cognitive structure and its limits are involved on our difficulty of elaborating a solid self-image and a stable identity. The intimate I is composed of ephemeral fragments of ideas, sensations, feelings, memories, hopes, which vary in a constant flux, as the images of never ending fireworks. No one can create a steady representation of who he is on such a material. On the other hand, especially because of vision's tendency to use Gestalts, the interacting I often generates a global caricature of who I am. For example people perceive my whole body, know my voice, my name. It is only in a mirror or a film that I can see what others see when they look at me, and have a tangible experience that I am a single limited organism, which contains the many facets of my intimate I.

Lacan supposed that it is only through what others perceive of us, that one can slowly construct a global image of who we are. He then shows how dependent on the quality of our relationships such a construction is. If the only source from which we can create a self- image is in the other's eyes, how can we manage to see oneself in a favourable way, if our parents saw us from the beginning as a menace life imposes on them?

This model has helped me enormously in my work, but my experience has found it incomplete. Luckily for me, I found that mirrors are not the only psychological place I can perceive myself as a global being.

1.2. Enhancing the Impression of having a coherent Self by interacting with one's organismic sensations

During a period of my life, I meditated regularly. At another, I explored myself in a realm called Biodynamic Psychology. When I would close my eyes, using these methods, I would focus my attention on all those fragments of mental representations, in exit or in entrance on the stage of my consciousness. Slowly, I discovered that all these mental materials did not fly in emptiness, but were more like fish swimming in an inner atmosphere I call 'aqualide'. As I became more familiar with this inner atmosphere, I felt it had a life of its own, which my therapists called 'life energy'. I later discovered that their formulation was flawed, because they forgot that the map is not the territory. I thus distinguish two dimensions of the organism:

1. The deep dynamics of the organism are, by definition, impossible to explore in a direct way. Their impact on psychological dynamics is at first nonconscious.
2. The nonconscious psychological reactions to physiological dynamics may generate a form of mental conscious inner atmosphere that summarizes the billion of events that are active in an organism at a given moment. This inner atmosphere has a fuzzy contour, but may be recognized and differentiated from other forms of inner atmospheres, if one regularly pays attention to them. These fuzzy impressions are a component of the background of conscious perceptions I call the aqualide.

I have the impression that most arguments advanced by Reich and Boyesen to justify there is a cosmic energy that animates, only function if one agrees to ignore that these two levels are distinct. There maybe different ways of understanding the

underlying dynamics of the impression that sensing the deeper dynamics of the organism often generates a unifying experience. However, the experience itself seems to have a robust basis, as thousands of authors who lived in different centuries and different social contexts have described it.

Just as a wave moves all the plants and fishes it contains in a unitary way, movements of that inner atmosphere seemed to move in a unitary way the various phenomena that migrate through my consciousness. Slowly, I felt this inner atmosphere to be a sort of inner pulsation which not only co-ordinates my inner feelings, but also my breathing, currents of heat and cold moving through my body... what Ebba Boyesen calls a bio-logic . Later, I learned to feel this when my eyes were opened, when I was not meditating or attending a 'Boyesen' group: during work or when dancing with friends. All that was required was that I focus my attention at a certain level of my being, and this feeling of deep inner coherence, which animates who I am, could be felt again. At these moments, I could feel myself as the product of a river that flows through me, and generates the multiple psychic events that sparkle in my consciousness. Thus, to feel united, I not only need to find people who perceive me in a constructive way, but I also need to feel inside me what many have described as the flow of life energy through the organism. Everything happens as if, to feel complete, I need to feel that the sensations that pass through me are a bridge joining the others and life's energy through my organism.

Freud (1914) defined narcissism as the pleasure a person has of taking care of how comfortably it functions. This is opposed to objectal libido, which is the pleasure of interacting with one's environment. One cannot help others if one does not function well enough to become helpful. Thus, narcissistic and objectal forms of libido are two complementary components of a healthy form of functioning. There are two ways of situating this deep inner force, when one uses Freud's libido theory as frame for one's analysis:

1. One believes that this experience is a sort of mental impression that summarizes the millions of processes that participate in the self-regulation of the organism. It is then one of the roots of healthy narcissism, of a preoccupation for independent well-being.
2. One believes that there really are forces of nature that animate our organism every second of life. In that case, this experience is our way of relating to this force. It is then not a narcissistic experience, but an objectal one.

Both analyses locate an identical impression of being in contact with a deep inner force. Many believe that this force knows what is good for the organism, and can heal it when consciousness blows on its ashes and kindles its power. However, this belief maybe a form of wishful thinking, which increases narcissist libido and the need to auto-regulate. When these deep undercurrents of the organism are experienced as a beneficiary force, the person feels encouraged to take care of how it functions; while those who experience it as a source of anxiety (e.g., something they cannot have control on) tend to avoid taking care of their organism.

My position is that jellyfish exercise aim at improving organismic auto-regulation. Physiological regulation mechanisms are sensitive to many external influences that cannot be perceived in a conscious way. Perceiving variations of physiological dynamics may therefore be an indirect way of perceiving external influences that cannot be detect by the six senses that participate in formation of conscious perceptions. This implies that what finally formulates itself into consciousness using such indirect forms of perception, often uses highly metaphorical forms based on memories of perceptions currently generated by the senses. There is thus a gap between (a) what influences physiological dynamics, (b) how these changes are perceived and (c) the representations used to understand what is happening.

I assume that those who are interested in the impact of cosmic or spiritual forces on the organism, try to use this indirect way of sensing the environment's impact as a way of *relating* to this impact. This attempt has been a highly creative one, which has developed since Yoga at least. It is a complex form of introspection, which aims at sensing one's environment by sensing variations of the aqualide, which may correlate with variations of organismic dynamics. Some colleagues use the jellyfish with

this sort of intention, but I do not believe that such aims are compatible with those of psychotherapy. I associate such forms of exploration to movements who wish to explore how much human consciousness can interact with nonconscious dynamics to perceive dimensions of reality one cannot access with one's senses.

Jellyfish exercises are a technique I use in my practice, when someone needs to increase their contact with the aqualide representations of these deep organismic currents. This is where I stop, when I am a psychotherapist. The second phase of the exploration (trying to sense external influences by sensing variations in my physiology), I associate with the notion of clinical research. Patients are not the subjects of my laboratory. However, as I sometimes have highly sensitive patients, it is some time useful to leave options open, and have a clear model of the distinctions I have just made.

2. Orgone and global psycho-physiological phenomena

2.1. Global psycho-physiological phenomena

Darwin's book on 'the expression of emotions in man and animals' is still a reference for the literature that discusses emotions from a psycho-physiological perspective. Biologists tend to describe emotions as a form of 'global psycho-physiological reactions' that focus most of our bodily resources on those psychological and behavioural units involved in the full expression of an emotion. Recently Lazarus (1991: 57) discussed this issue in the following terms:

In anger and fear, "physiological activity is evident and readily interpreted as bodily mobilisation to cope with an emergency. The concept of fight or flight as prototypes originated with Cannon (1939), who spelled out how the autonomic nervous system and the catecholamines secreted by the medulla or inner portion of the adrenal glands work in emergencies. Selye (1956) elaborated on this theme of neurohumoral mobilisation to physiologically noxious or demanding stimuli but emphasised the hormones secreted by the cortex or outer ring of the adrenal glands (corticosteroids such as cortisol), which play a major role in anabolic and catabolic activity, especially in prolonged stress". Lazarus then argues that other emotions such as sadness and depression are the epitome for non-activation (except in agitated or 'crying' depressions). With these emotions, the inner movement is that of a withdrawal rather than that of mobilisation. This is why he prefers to relate emotions to various forms of physiological change rather than just a mobilisation.

Konrad Lorenz was of the same generation of Viennese intellectuals as Reich. Because they sympathized with a different extreme of the political polarity formed by Communism and Nazism, they disqualified each other's work. Nevertheless, now that time has passed, one can only be astonished at the number of similarities between Reich's and Lorenz's modes of thinking. Lorenz created Ethology with the aim of observing the phylogenetic development of behaviour. This perspective relied heavily on the supposition that as they developed, species improved on previous ways of adapting to our environment, and that this development forms a coherent history. In 'Behind the mirror' (:46 - 48) Lorenz describes some basic psycho-physiological functions observed in all species... through more or less complex incarnations. He gives the following example, relevant to our discussion:

"In most living organism, (...), the capacity to respond to stimuli is closely linked with that of locomotion. The primary and most important function of locomotion is to enable the animal to escape from danger. Possibly an even more primitive function of physical movement is when by maximal contraction of the body the organism exposes as small a surface as possible to the threatening external forces and turns the folds in the surface into a thick protective skin.

"Strangely enough, the simplest and most primitive stimulus elicited motion that we know of in the organic world is oriented in all three dimensions of space. The amoeba, consisting merely of a naked mass of protoplasm, moves by reducing the thickness of its outer layer, the ectoplasm, at one particular point; a blunt outgrowth is then formed which, as the ectoplasm becomes still thinner, develops into a so-called pseudopod ('false foot'). As the resistance becomes less, the content of the cell moves into the pseudopod, the base of which extends, and the whole cell thus moves slowly forwards. Corresponding

to the outgrowth of the pseudopods, a contraction and thickening of the ectoplasm takes place at the posterior end of the amoeba.

"This formation of pseudopods and the corresponding motion of the amoeba used to be explained by assuming that the principal cause was changes in the surface tension. An indeed, one can make models to imitate the whole process very accurately by using globular drops and varying their surface tension. After observing amoebae in relatively natural conditions for some time, however, I concluded that this was too simple an explanation. On the basis of my direct observations I maintained that the plasma of the amoeba constantly changed from a condition of sol to one of gel and vice versa; within the cell it flows out in the pseudopod, then, in the way that flowing lava hardens, it congeals when it makes contact with water, soil or some other feature of the environment. What superficially appears as a decrease in surface tension, and indeed, liquefaction of the gelled ectoplasm, which begins internally at the point where a pseudopod is to be formed. This view, based on a series of simple observations, has since been corroborated by the work of L.V. Heilbrunn. When a noxious stimulus touches the surface of the organism, causing it to contract and start crawling away, this is achieved by the gelling of the liquid plasma immediately adjacent to the point of stimulation. The contraction is caused by the fact that the gelling is accompanied by a slight decrease in the volume of the protoplasm, which has a mechanical effect equivalent to that of an increase in surface tension.

"If one observes an amoeba in his natural habitat, not on a slide but moving freely in a petri dish, one is amazed at the versatility of its behaviour and its adaptability. If it were the size of a dog, said H.S.Jennings, the greatest expert on protozoa, one would not hesitate to attribute to it the power of subjective experience. Still it only has this one, single manner of movement by which to deal with all environmental situations. One must keep in mind that it is one and the same mechanism by means of which the amoeba avoids damage in 'fear' of being injured, moves towards a source of positive stimulation, or, in the optimal situation, embraces an object that emits positive stimuli and greedily consumes it."

This text introduces several mechanisms we shall need in our discussion on jellyfish exercises. For example, Lorenz shows that an organism fluctuates between two extreme states:

1. When in danger or stressed, all living creatures tend to contract, and occupy as little space as possible.
2. In more comfortable situations, an organism tends to expand and produces a greater variety of expressive behaviours which can be associated to propensities such as 'reaching towards' or a tendency to move towards an aim (a refuge, an enemy, food, a love object, etc.).

Furthermore, Lorenz shows how the dynamics of such behaviour are closely related to the dynamics through which inner plasma and membrane co-ordinate each other. Reich assumes that complex organisms use the same mechanism, which are now composed of highly differentiated cogwheels. Thus, in the human organisms, *vegetative mechanisms* (breathing, blood, hormones, nervous activity) and affects coordinate (a) thoughts and behaviours with (b) metabolic resources, using complex and flexible ways of contracting and expanding.

2.2. Energetic approaches

Since humans exist, they have often experienced some of the consequences of such global psycho-physiological phenomena. Long before physiology and neurosciences existed, most cultures (Hatha-Yoga in India, Acupuncture in China, etc...) had produced models that accounted for such phenomena using an energy model: when a person is happy, her energy field expands; when she feels anxious, her energy field contracts. The basic idea is that a person's body is part of an energy field, and that the dynamics of this energy field co-ordinates physiological and psychological mechanisms to produce efficacious behaviours.

Once one has assumed that an energy field animates the organism, one assumes that it can coordinate all organismic functions (mental, physiological, bodily, etc.) in a coherent and harmonious way with what surrounds us. Even if this model is only a metaphor, it stresses since immemorial times the experience of globality one may experience when one contacts at a more conscious and psychological level one's

vegetative dynamics. A given dynamic state of the energy field is perceived by consciousness through affective feelings. Yogis already knew that when an intense emotion remained locked in our feelings for a long time without being expressed, our global psycho-physiological system became stressed.

Using similar observations, various cultures have long ago constructed complex and efficient models that allow humans to understand global psycho-physiological phenomena in a way that could be used concretely in massage, medicine, various forms of psychotherapies, body-mind exercises, etc... It may well be that future knowledge will replace such metaphoric models by a more complex system of psycho-physiological laws. For the moment, psychophysiology is too young a field to provide a form of know-how that can efficiently help people on such matters, so that many practitioners still need to use some of the old models. Body psychotherapists often have a training which includes (a) becoming familiar with current scientific research, (b) staying in contact with current developments in psychotherapy and (c) following various forms of training in such techniques as Yoga, Tai-Chi and trance techniques.

2.2.1. Reich's physiology of energetic phenomena

At the beginning of the century, pioneers such as Freud and Schultz tried to reformulate at least some elements of the energetic paradigm in neurological and physiological terms. Thus, Shultz suggested that feelings of inner warmth are caused by blood circulation (vaso-dilatation) and the sensation of heaviness in the limbs by muscular relaxation. Reich nevertheless pointed out that he was under the impression that at least some warm streamings did not seem to follow the arterial pathways. He (1945: 357) also reminded those who tend to skip certain obvious methodological points, that finding an association between A) a sensation and B) a physiological mechanism does not necessarily imply a direct causal link between A and B:

"In terms of their function, the physical plasma motion and the sensation corresponding to it are, as we learned from experiments on the oscillograph, completely identical. (...) What moves in this process is nothing but orgone energy that is contained in the body fluids. Accordingly, the mobilisation of plasmatic currents and emotions in the organism is identical with the mobilisation of orgone energy". For Reich (1945: 358), "our work is concentrated on the biological depth, the plasma system, or, as we express it technically, the biological core of the organism. This, as is readily evident, is a decisive step, for it means that we have left the sphere of psychology, of 'depth' psychology as well, and have entered the province of protoplasmic functions, even going beyond the physiology of nerves and muscles".

The type of consciousness in which a sensation is involved will influence the relation between physiology and this sensation, just as the state of physiological mechanisms will influence the relation between this sensation and consciousness. There is here a three step reciprocal feedback:

1. Cognitive mechanisms provide long-term views of what is to be done.
2. Emotions allow cognitive mechanisms to incarnate themselves through an action by mobilising a relevant chain of physiological reactions.
3. Physiological reactions have their own logic. They generate sensations that create emotions informing the mind of the organic possibilities it can count on at a given moment.

You will notice that often these three functional levels operate more or less consciously, more or less together. It would seem that when consciousness focuses on the inner atmosphere that surrounds what it perceives, it can interact with that part of us (mainly nonconscious) which co-ordinates all the functions of our organism. In other words, when our consciousness is aware of the affective atmosphere generated by what could be our energy field, we not only are filled by a sensation of well being, but we also seem to operate more efficiently. Being in conscious contact with our aqualide for a long time is probably too demanding an effort for a citizen... In the end, however, one can learn to allow longer spans of such consciousness to exist. One of the strategies we use in body-psychotherapy, is a form of support which allows any

citizen to experience such moments in as an intense and long period of time as possible, with the hope that afterwards our client will learn to contact such regenerating experiences for at least short periods of time, fairly regularly. This aspect of our work is often best explored in groups and workshops.

Reich (1973: 89-90) believed that one of the ways to acquire such a capacity is to learn to trust one's 'organ sensations'. Our consciousness only has access to sensations that *correlate* with organic dynamics, but it cannot explore directly what is happening in an organ. According to Reich, these 'organ sensations' are nevertheless often related to real inner movements of physiological fluids. Learning to perceive such sensations in a differentiated way may therefore be a powerful way of improving the relations between our consciousness and our physiology. Such an improvement is an important one if, like Reich, you believe that our organism first of all perceives something through a physiological reaction, and only gradually transforms this reaction in various sensations our consciousness can deal with more or less comfortably. Thus, it is only through organ sensations that we can experience what happens inside and around us at a level that is sufficiently concrete to generate love. In other words, it is only by learning to contact how our body reacts to our world, which we can learn to love the nature these sensations are part of. Reich thought that some basic ecological problems are created by cultural beliefs who teach people to be afraid of their organ sensations... and therefore of nature.

2.2.2. Orgonomy: reichian psychosomatics

In the Cosmic Superimposition, written at the end of his life, Reich focuses on how a human is grounded in nature. For Reich, mind and emotions are part of the universe, not outside of it. They are therefore material dynamics. This affirmation is only possible if one redefines matter in such a way that it has the capacity of containing psychological dynamics. It is impossible to assume that our grounding in nature is not composed of chemical elements and of the electrons that connect them, and includes thoughts in nature's web of causal chains. (: 22)

We cannot be grounded in nature by something that differentiates us from the rest of nature. Thus our capacity to speak, to think, to walk, to eat cannot be what grounds us in nature. Nor can it be social and cultural structures. Nor can it be such chemical and physical substances as salt, water, sugar, carbon hydrates, etc., as they cannot be observed in every part of nature. All such functions are only marginal aspects of our basic grounding. Nature does not speak, does not walk, does not eat, and is not made of proteins, of carbon hydrates, of lipids. The only common grounding phenomena he could think of, was the basic energetic phenomena that can be observed in all creatures. This energy is therefore one that can create aliveness, and transform matter in biological dynamics. This energy he calls 'orgone'. (: 25 - 26)

The creation of organism is for Reich an orgone field that condenses until it transforms a part of the field in material structures that organize themselves around an energetic chore. The chore then generates a pulsating orgone field, which oscillates between chore and membrane. It is this pulsation that coordinates organismic dynamics (metabolic, vegetative, behavioural and psychological). Organisms that are more complex contain a whole hierarchy of such fields. Each organ, each cell has its own field. Moments of bliss are moments when all these fields pulsate in harmony with each other (: 60 - 63).

This last formulation needed to be refined, even when one is willing to follow Reich's general formulation. Gerda Boyesen, for example, notices how energy and fluids can be stuck in a layer of the body (e.g., endo-, meso- or ecto-derm). This vision made her attentive to how these layers interact with each other:

"I have this concept of membrane tension, or rather hypertension. By that, I mean that the energy ought to go towards the exits of the body, at least any excess energy; out of the top of the head, through the face, out through the hands and fingers, the feet and toes and through the skin. However, if there is a conflict, it does not. For example if there is a conflict in the arms of giving and taking, or not doing so, then, besides the muscular tension that prevents it so moving, there will be a membrane tension.

The body breathes through the skin; sweat goes out. So also, energy goes out through the skin to create the aura. If there is a membrane tension, it does not go out. It builds up in the body and helps create psychosomatic symptoms. If, however, there is too little membrane tension due to fatigue or exhaustion, then the body leaks energy, and more exhaustion is created. The leaks can occur through the fingers and hands, and through the skin. (...) It is a depletion. It often happens when you have given too much or people have taken too much from you, and it is usually connected with not having enough strength in the motoric ego - not being firm enough."

"Membrane tension can be likened to a balloon. Too much pressure from the inside and it becomes taut and swollen; too little and it is flabby. In the first instance, the energy cannot get out; in the latter, it leaks out.

"When I see a picture of Wilhelm Reich in the last years of his life, I notice that this face was swollen a lot. He had a lot of stasis in his face. I think a lot of that was due to membrane tension and to tissue armour. Now tissue armour is released after the muscular armour has been broken down. In this case, the muscle armour has been worked with, so that there was little armour left. There is then a lot of energy in one that wants to flow. If you then have a difficult life, as Wilhelm Reich did, with a lot of disappointments, there is still a conflict. This manifests itself on the tissue level, not the muscular one. The energy was flowing in him and trying to come out and trying to come out, but the membrane tension and the tissue armour of the residual conflicts in the hands, head and skin did not allow it to flow freely. To feel so much as he did and then to have to be so much on guard will create a peripheral tension. The membrane tension led to skin troubles.

The difference between membrane tension and tissue armour is that tissue armour is the accumulated waste materials with toxins and irritants in the tissue, which traps the energy and creates a solidification. It is more permanent and is not easy to influence by purely psychological means; whereas the membrane tension is a direct result of the present physiological state that one is in, and this is more easy to influence ". (Gerda Boyesen 1982: 61 - 63).

For Reich (1973: 112) an organ sensation occurs when a movement of the plasma reaches the membrane, for it is through membranes that communication between systems occurs... it is not by chance if the sensitive nervous organs all developed from the ectoderm.

3. Organismic pulsation

3.1. Basic pulsation movement

Let us now look a bit closer at the energetic psychophysiology model that one usually thinks of, when one works with jellyfish exercises.

Orgone "governs the entire organism; it is expressed in the emotions as well as in the purely biophysical movements of the organs" (Reich 1945: 356 - 358). Exercises modulating orgone flow may thus have at least two experiential dimensions:

1. A movement may mobilize the body's pleasure of moving without activating emotions. It is then a 'vital' movement. This is often the case in such disciplines as sport.
2. A movement may associate with emotional dynamics. It then becomes an 'emotional' movement.

In both vital and emotional activation, all the fields of the organism accelerate their pulsation, to create mostly outward going movements of fluids: heart and breathing accelerates, blood flows mostly in skeletal muscles, etc. Both Reich and Gerda Boyesen seem to have some difficulty digesting what they found. Although I am sure they both agree with me on the point I shall make, they cannot help to relapse in the cliché that pleasure is expansion, and contraction displeasure.

Given that we are constantly pulsating, it is absurd to classify all pleasures as expansions, and all condensations as anxiety. As far as I am concerned, the formula of pleasure includes a constant pulsation oscillating between expansion and condensation: no one could always want to expand. There is the pleasure of going out dancing, drinking, meeting people; and the pleasure of staying several days in bed, alone. If one of these states were eliminated from my life, I would become miserable. Both are, I believe, essential to health. Pleasure then becomes a pulsation

within a boundary that gives a sense of contained pleasure. This is well described by Keleman:

"The processes that generate excitation determine a human's needs: oxygen, sodium, potassium, contact, interaction, water. They generate that dynamic state which calls for these ingredients, and even manufactures them. Now, that becomes extremely important in anybody who's working biologically. That is, your approach to somebody, whether you are massaging them, dancing with them or breathing, kicking, having social interaction, or psychotherapeutical lifting off destructive images. In any of those approaches, what you are getting at is, hopefully, the generation or the encouragement of what is called aliveness, but what I will call excitement. Permitting basic biological interaction which generates excitement, which generates need, which generates desire, because that becomes then the alpha and the omega of what you're working with."

"Then, what is boundedness? What is a boundary? Well, I think that boundedness and boundarying, and inhibition can be summarised in four words: the hope for satisfaction. Actually, it is satisfaction; forming boundaries generates satisfaction. That may seem peculiar to you, but what is the function of the creation of boundaries or inhibition, the containment of charge? It is at once and the same time the wish not to disperse oneself and a wish to be oneself, maintain the excitement, maintain the feeling, maintain the ability to satisfy, and be satisfied, let the hungers reside in a configuration that feeds back as completion, not continual expansion."

"Living, desire, reaches toward satisfaction, on the cell level, and the human level, living, which is desire plus action, plus satisfaction, forms the self."

In emotions, there is at first an outward movement, followed by a pleasurable condensation, during which we bring back to our inner layers the feeling of having successively expressed ourselves and communicated. In fright, a startle reaction transforms the condensation phase in a contraction, which then becomes an expensive tendency to run away, to disperse. If this is successful, we then experience a relief that ends in a pleasurable condensation:

"If all is well, the streamings or energy potential in the body should give natural growth and self-realisation both psychologically and physically. Such energy should be available as a sort of reservoir to be drawn upon in emotional or emergency situations and also in ecstasy and delight. If a critical situation arises, the organism has to draw from the reservoir the amount of energy needed to cope with the situation; but after this has been abreacted and the danger is over, the energy should be free to flow back to the reservoir and to circulate round the body giving the natural feeling of aliveness and well-being" (Gerda Boyesen 1972).

When this emotional pulsative regulation of the organism and the environment is inhibited, one observes a general disruption of the pulsation. Here are examples of such disturbances:

- 1 The organism has a diminished capacity to expand.
- 2 The organism can only condense by contracting.
- 3 The organism can only condense pleurably after a small expansion.
- 4 An organism can only have extreme pulsations (extremely expressive or extreme anxious introversion)... it cannot modulate the amplitude of the pulsation.

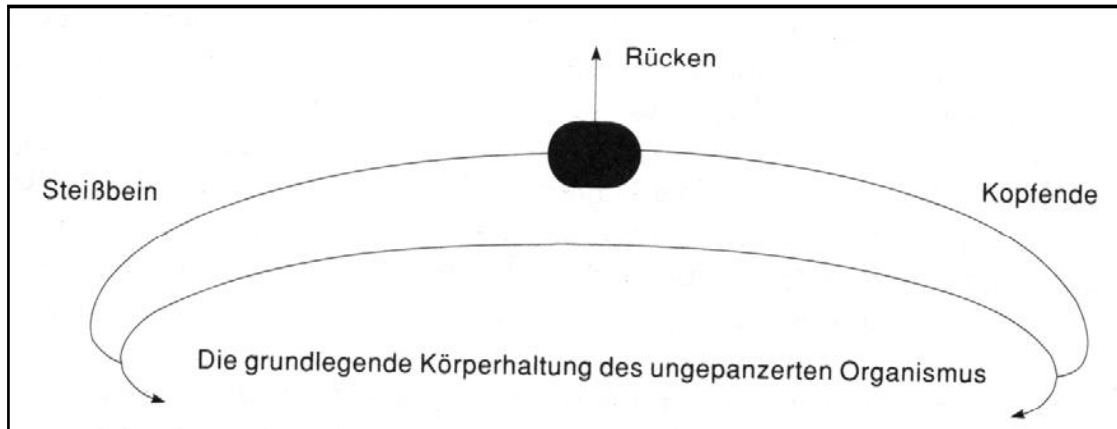
In other words, I prefer to distinguish different ways of pulsating, rather than to associate phases of a pulsation to various sensations. Jellyfish exercises allow us to contact whatever impairment our pulsative regulative system may have acquired. Its aim is to find again that possibility of co-ordinating movement, sensations, emotions, and the pulsation of our energetic field. As we become able to contact this aspect of our core psycho-physiological capacities, we also become able to explore pulsative possibilities we have lost... or we could acquire.

One of the functions of jellyfish exercises is to use movements to teach our energy field and our consciousness to contact each other in a constructive way. Jellyfish mostly exercises the motor ego, and its capacity to regulate our depth and our consciousness while we are moving. This function is fairly close to some of the aims of Chi Kung exercises, but there are also major differences. The aim of Orgonomy is to focus on emotional, sexual, and regressive experiences... which is one of the reasons why clients are asked to breath with their mouth, as it is a respiratory practice

activated by most strong emotional states. Another difference is probably due to the fact that Reich started as a psychoanalyst, and never took the time to learn from other bodily techniques: jellyfish exercises always begin with a client lying down, back on the couch.

3.2. The connective pulsation

Drawing I (Reich 1945: 364)



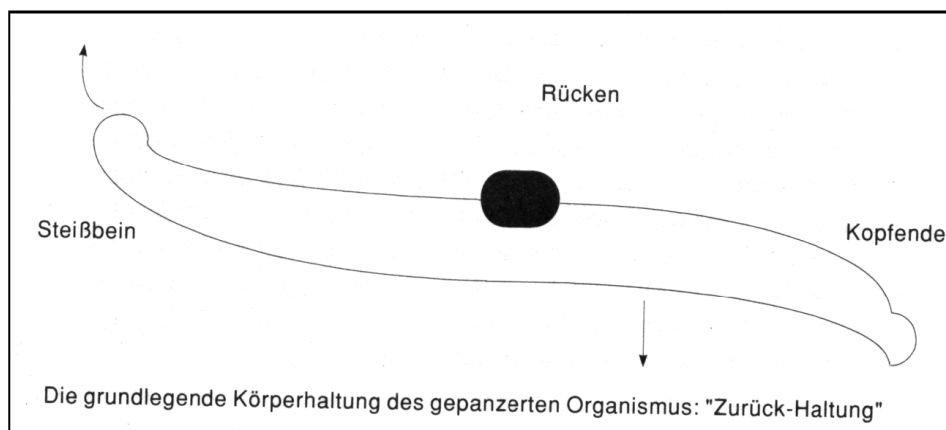
Reich had explored two models of energy circulation:

1. The orgasm reflex was represented by Reich as a sort of *worm movement*, when he created Vegetotherapy in Oslo. He described "a longitudinal pulsation of the worm, which consists "in soft forward and upward movements" through which pelvis and mouth come closer to each other (Reich 1973: 204 - 205).
2. The three-dimensional *pulsation of the amoeba* he described later, when he developed Orgonomy in the USA, has already been described. It flows rhythmically from chore to periphery and back.

At the end of his life, Reich was dedicated to a "unitary concept of the organism" (Reich 1945: 357). When he created Orgonotherapy on the basis of Character Analysis and Vegetotherapy, it was "out of the question to break up a living organism into character traits here, muscles there, and plasma functions elsewhere" (same: 391 - 394). When he developed the jellyfish exercise, it was to work with movements through which both mechanisms could be co-ordinated:

This movement can be associated to such feelings as 'longing' and 'surrender': "a yearning for superimposition" with the other, as well as a "cosmic longing and cosmic sensations"; as "in the orgasm, the living organism is nothing but a part of pulsating nature". (Reich 1973: 204 - 205)

Drawing II (Reich 1945: 364)



This movement global movement has a centre:

The organism pulsates around "the largest and most important ganglion apparatus", which "is located in the middle of the trunk, near the back": "the plexus solaris". At one time or another, everyone has seen cats clutched by the fur of their backs and lifted into the air. The soft body of the cat appears to be doubled up: the head end is brought close to the pelvic end; head, fore and hind legs hang down limply. (...) Naturally, we can imagine any animal in the same position, even man. There is, as is always the case when the body assumes a position, an emotional expression". Observing this position Reich has "the impression of a jellyfish with tentacles. (...) We can enlarge upon the analogy. The central nervous apparatus of the jellyfish is located in the middle of the back, as is the solar plexus in the vertebrates. When the jellyfish moves, the ends of the body approach and move away from one another in rhythmic interchange."

When both extremes of the trunk move toward each other "we have the condition of contraction. When they are as far apart as they can be, we have a condition of expansion or relaxation of the organomic system. (...) If this pulsation is accelerated, if it takes on a clonic form, we have the expressive movement of the orgasmic convulsion. (...) In short, the expressive movement of the orgasm reflex represents a highly important, contemporary mobilisation of a biological form of movement which goes as far back as the jellyfish stage", at least. (Reich 1945: 395 - 396)

3.3. Biodynamic tools used for jellyfish exercises

3.3.1. Primary personality

When Gerda Boyesen and Mona-Lisa Boyesen taught the jellyfish exercises to the training group I was a member of, they acknowledged the sexual potential of these movements. As the pulsation is a central component of the organism's capacity to auto-regulation, it must necessarily have a motivating libidinous dimension. This libido is of the same nature than the one that generates pleasurable experiences during orgasm. Without this self-rewarding narcissistic dimension, functions such as sexuality and auto-regulation are not invested and developed. On the other hand, when one is contact with that pleasure of existing and doing, one has the power to contact what Gerda Boyesen calls our 'primary personality'. The relation between primary personality and pulsation comes out clearly in Clover Southwell's (1979) definition of the term:

"The biodynamic therapeutic process is (...) the uncovering and re-owning of one's own true self, at as many levels as possible. And the key factor in this process will be pressure: the expansive pressure intrinsic to the organismic core of the Primary personality.

This organismic core may need to be re-awakened. But it is there. The positive affirmative life force of the Primary personality, with its impulse to express itself, to fulfil its true nature. And this is the organism's own natural self-healing power."

3.3.2. Diaphragm

Gerda Boyesen also insisted on the importance of the diaphragm in such exercises. This muscle is located near the solar plexus. It plays a central role in all forms of movement that mobilize all the segments of the body. Furthermore, if you look at drawings of the diaphragm, you will be astonished at how closely it sometimes looks like a jellyfish:

"In reality, in this area (of the solar plexus) one must distinguish two structures with totally different functions. One is an important nervous plexus made of multiple ganglions and of an entanglement of nervous nets belonging to the autonomous system which adjusts and co-ordinates all the vegetative functions of abdominal viscera and which some times responds to conscious emotional stimulations or images coming from the unconscious. The other is a powerful muscle, the diaphragm, separating the thoracic and abdominal cavities, which has the function of ventilating the alveolus air cells and of spreading this vital spirit of the ancients, the *pneuma*, which is the essential source of life. As the great Swiss physiologist W.R. Hess wrote more than forty years ago, this muscle constitutes, as it were, through its variation of tonus, of contraction and relaxation, the master piece of all the complex muscular system involved in a cycle and a rhythm which stretches from birth to death."

"To the variations of the diaphragm tone and following a similar cycle corresponds those of the two 'rectus abdominis' abdominal muscles, the relief of which limits the wall of the solar region situated between the inferior edge of the 'xiphoid' appendix and the free partition of the last cartilaginous ribs. Their role in maintaining intra-abdominal pressure and in the suspension of the pelvis is fundamental.

"(...) It is in this area that the structures which have the function of allowing full freedom of action of the limbs, neck, and head. This is probably why the area is considered to be the source of perceived emotions allowing us to express a wide variety of feelings." (Cournand, 1956 noble price of medicine, 1973)

For Reich (1945: 387-388) "the diaphragmatic block prevents the peristaltic wavelike movement of the body energy upward from the stomach toward the mouth". The main technique he used to open this block was vomiting: "Vomiting is accompanied by a convulsion of the trunk, a rapid folding in the pit of the stomach, with neck and pelvic end jerking forward. (...) The dissolution of the diaphragmatic block introduces, with certainty, the first convulsions of the trunk which, subsequently, develop into the total orgasm reflex".

In her development of Vegetotherapy techniques, Gerda Boyesen often works with the diaphragm / orgasm dimension, and she acknowledges - if I have understood her correctly - a relation between the restoration of orgasmic potential and coming into contact with our self, our Primary personality. She some times uses vomiting to open a diaphragm, but she has acquired and invented other techniques, which allow her to integrate the opening of the diaphragm in the general mobility of the organism. This work is central to 'Deep Draining' and 'Vegetotherapy' massage she has created, and to her way of using jellyfish exercises.

Reich considered that loosening someone's diaphragm helps her to contact and perceive the inner cosmic realms orgasm is rooted in. More Jungian than Reichian here, Gerda Boyesen sees the opening of the diaphragm as the opening of a process, which allows you to gradually discover yourself, and allows the deeper layers of your self to become conscious in everyday life. Both Reich and Boyesen seem to think that neurosis cannot be 'cured' as long as the diaphragm remains closed.

Muscular tissues are connected a) to the central nervous system, and b) to the vegetative nervous system. Referring herself to the Freudian model, Gerda Boyesen relates the first connection to what she calls the 'voluntary ego', and the second connection to what she defines as the 'id'. Muscular tissues are thus that part of us which can regulate consciousness and id: it is our 'motoric ego'. When sufficiently developed the motoric ego regulates emotions (a) without our will having to repress them, and (b) without intrusive invasions of our mind by emotions:

"If we imagine that instinctual, emotional energies rise from the depths of intestinal walls, we can understand the importance of the diaphragm. Indeed, when it contracts and is lowered, it prevents energy from rising in our chest, and then towards the expressive zones of our body: head, arms, hands. Inversely, when we choose to express an emotion, the diaphragm pulsates and in a way 'pumps' energy in the chest and sends it to the expressive zones. In dangerous situations, the motoric ego must not be too active, so that our instinctual energy may manifest itself with all its strength, either by a scream, or by making us run away, or in a fight". Gerda Boyesen (1985a: 126 - 128)

At other moments, of course, the strength of our motoric ego is of utmost importance.

During the 1980s, Gerda Boyesen often distinguished three functional issues, in her courses on the diaphragm:

- 1) An organ such as the diaphragm usually has several functions.
- 2) For each function, a certain type of behaviour is relevant.
- 3) The organ must be able to pass from one modality to another in a relevant way, in terms of self-regulation and in terms of adaptation to one's environment.

The following case illustrates one of the ways Gerda Boyesen (1982) works with the 'opening' of the diaphragm:

This woman "came to see me in Paris to get treatment. She had a lot of anxiety and pain: pain in her back, around her heart, in her neck and head. She also felt desperate. I was not very successful in treating her at first. She was only there for four days and I did not really understand what was going on until the last day. She had to fly back home in a few hours and she was feeling so bad that she could not take a taxi or go out alone. I suddenly understood that the reason for her being so ill was to do with a lot of membrane tension.

If you consider the upper half of the body, above the diaphragm, as a balloon surrounded by a surface of membrane tension, then the pressure from the inside, rising in the body, will create anxiety and desperation. Because this lady did not have much armour, the energy could flow freely in the body but could not be expressed. I understood that it was not negative energy coming out in her arms, or rage, but that it was healthy, creative, healing energy coming into her arms and head, but without an exit.

The membrane tension seems to be directed by a psychological force, but it is also connected with the motoric ego and the skeletal muscles. I just told her, while she was lying on the mattress, to give energy to the mattress. Using this image allowed her to loosen the membrane tension and relax the muscles because she was consciously and voluntarily using the motoric ego to relax the 'Grip'.

She 'gave' to the mattress and she got better and better. The pain disappeared and she looked normal. She then said that it was ridiculous to 'give' to the mattress when she could give to me, Gerda. I was quite exhausted and she gave her energy to me."

The reason why I quote this example is to show how an opening of the deeper layers of the Self (in this case Gerda Boyesen talks of a 'spiritual opening') may cause a lot of damage, if the expressive side of a person is not able to deal with her deeper feelings. The primary personality of this person is nearly open, the muscular armour has been "broken down and one is coming into contact with the creative personality, the last defences are going." At such a moment, you are "ready for a more Jungian approach." The creative force is there to be used, but what happens if you are not able to use it? :

"Berlioz got ill when he did not compose. Karl Gustav Jung got ill when he didn't write. This creative force is directed by one's psychic force and this makes the soma healthy.

In a similar way, the motoric ego is just a tool which needs direction from the brain. People can often get ill if they do not have a direction in this area. They will lack determination, purpose and assertion, and tend to resign and collapse. This can sometimes manifest itself along with a spiritual opening." (Gerda Boyesen 1982)

As for electricity, energy cannot just be stoked in a corner. It has to do something, always. If it cannot express itself through current channels, it may end up by doing anything... including destroying you.

Various ways of working on the diaphragm are thus required to cover its functional diversity. With jellyfish exercises, one is aiming at a slow pulsatory wave like movement of the diaphragm, which I associate in my dreams to a giant ray fish swimming in the oceanic depths. When this inner movement appears, one may experience oneself as being first of all an immense pulsating field of energy while one is working, walking in the street, talking with somebody, or as one falls asleep.

Such a feeling is deeply regenerating... if one can bare it. This experience is profound and powerful when 'it' appears. Feeling this, some people are at first worried, afraid of becoming mad, and do everything to kill the feeling. When one works with the diaphragm, it is therefore important to wait until a person is able to integrate what may happen. For some people, bliss is a long forgotten feeling, associated to circumstances that created frighteningly intense episodes of anxiety. They may therefore experience total fear if suddenly they have the impression that a giant ray fish opens its wings to fly in the deep waters of a Self filled with libido. They do not know how to control a motoric ego that begins to pulsate freely, independently from whatever they may think or do.

As you become more familiar with the experience, you will notice that the regulation of emotions and behaviour are not impaired, but that your cognitive system is unable to adapt to your new way of being. This last bit is in fact the most difficult

and dangerous part of a jellyfish process, as often centuries of cultural rules condition how you and those you know think. When a person begins to feel these pulsating experiences, she is often opened, in process, highly sensitive, and not always able to bare a direct conflict between their deep self and cultural backgrounds. This is why, for me, a jellyfish process must occur within a psychotherapeutic frame: if you go through the whole jellyfish process, it is your whole being which is addressed.

3.3.3. Power

The human body can be affected in many ways in which its power of acting is increased or diminished. (Spinoza 1677a, III., postulates: 70)

Probably because of his obsession with orgasm, Reich mostly focused on the longitudinal pulsation, although in his drawings he clearly shows that pulsations are on all sides of a centre. He thus has not spoken much of lateral pulsation (between left and right). Working with movements and breathing pulsating laterally, I have often come across issues related to the regulation of power. Opening one's arms is taking one's space. If you do this in a crowded dancing, you will inevitably come into conflict with another person's space. Talking loudly relates to the same issue. Moving a lot means asking others to spend much energy processing the data you are sending in a situational space. Generally speaking, many psychotherapists have forgotten, and with him the issue of power, which is nevertheless a central part of how our self-regulation and our creative-self are co-ordinated to others and to the social resources required for the expression of our needs.

Theoretically, I do not have much more to say on the subject. Practically it means to focus much more than one usually does on lateral pulsation.

4. Educational / process psychotherapy

4.1. Educational psychotherapy

Some people come to see me with the hope that I will help them to face the problems that keep intruding in their lives. Indeed, they seem to have a particularly dramatic destiny. In a few months I find them losing their job or a parent, their lover is arrested for selling drugs, their bank account is suddenly empty, and their child is kicked out of school and becomes anorexic.

These clients want a psychotherapy centred on their *official* problems. They are often people with a weak ego, who lack the social support (friends, family...) to face current life issues... or suffocate in forms of support that are too rigidly structured. They seem to need a form of psychotherapy that helps them to complete an education on social knacks that were often insufficiently developed. For example parents who are angry that you are born, cannot teach you to ask for help. Such work can seldom be sustained for a long time, as these clients will inevitably find a new dramatic event in their life that should require all our attention. The aim of such processes is a reconstruction of a usually poorly structured personality, and support to enhance socialisation and communicative possibilities.

As a therapist, I some times listen to a patient's life as if I was reading a fascinating novel. Patients keep focusing my attention on the suspense of their expectations. Inevitably, I become interested. At the same time, my attention is distracted from this novel by an inner personal contract to contact deeper layers of my client: this person requires grounding, relaxation, the soft libido of a jellyfish exercise, etc. These 'process' techniques, which I shall discuss in a moment, are also useful in an educational psychotherapy, but at homeopathic doses. The client agrees to explore them as long as no special event intrudes in his current activities.

My basic analysis, in such cases, is that these clients rely so much on their willpower, that many nonconscious skills are inhibited. Grounding and jellyfish exercises, which bring vibrations in the legs and arms, are then particularly useful, as a person cannot escape noticing that during these exercises the body vibrates without the ascent of willpower, and that these bodily phenomena bring unexpected - and not always wanted - affects in their consciousness. The fact that these deep experi-

enced can be activated by a simple exercise can be reassuring. Exercises can be stopped, and used again later.

4.2. Process psychotherapy

When a person is sufficiently structured, it is possible to ignore most of the ongoing events of your client's life, and focus on the deeper mechanisms that are at the root of the way he reacts to whatever is happening. This type of work is what I call 'process psychotherapy'. You then use techniques that have their own aims, their own logic.

Freud's technique for analysing dreams is an example of process psychotherapy. He attempts to find the meaning of a dream by nosing about in his patient's personal associations. This exploration has an aim: finding repressed memories that play a fundamental role in the client's ways of dealing with life events. In the process, the client also learns many important things, such as learning to respect his feelings, his needs and the cultural world that have materialised in a unique way in his mind. Jungian dream analysis is often closer to educational therapy, as you are taught to contact your deep self by learning an existing language of the unconscious realm. For Freud, transference phenomena were perceived as a defence against process psychotherapy, forcing the psychotherapist to transform the cure in an educational psychotherapy (Heller 1987a).

Another example of process psychotherapy is Reich's Vegetotherapy. The aim is to repair the orgasmic reflex. Again, the process is informative: you learn to trust your body and your feelings, your emotional and sexual expressions as well as those of others, and to let life energy nourish your soul. Similar remarks can be made of some of Gerda Boyesen's methods, such as Deep Draining and Vegetotherapy massage.

4.3. Jellyfish in psychotherapy

Jellyfish exercises can be used to explore several layers of a person (from relaxation to deep organomic phenomena), and with different perspectives. You can use one or two jellyfish exercises to explore body / mind or sexological issues in the frame of an educational psychotherapy. If your aim is that of contacting the pulsating self, then one must go through most of the jellyfish exercises and enter a fairly long processes psychotherapy.

Only doing jellyfish exercises is impossible, as such a process often brings up material our motoric and mental egos did not learn to deal with. My way of dealing with this in the frame of a process-psychotherapy is to combine jellyfish exercises with a dream analysis technique close to Freud's. The main difference is that I include in the web of free associations, not only verbally expressed impression, but also organic (peristaltic noises) and bodily (gestures) events. For example if a foot moves as we are thinking of the element of a dream, I ask the client to include this movement in his associations. When a client involved in process psychotherapy needs to tell a tale, or live an organic discharge, I follow whatever is happening. Such events often lead to a deep reorganisation of the self that then allows us to deepen the process. Once we know where a regression or a tale leads us, and once this material has been somewhat digested, I do not follow the matter further: I come back to the basic technique I was using.

When I am involved in an educational therapy, on the other hand, I follow whatever material is brought by a tale and/or a vegetative discharge. For example, if I work on the orgasmic reflex, the client might feel an enormous anger associated to fantasies of killing the father. It is impossible to ignore such material. Once the experienced anger has lost its spontaneous momentum, I will do nothing to stimulate it, and will not push the subject further than what comes spontaneously. If I did (which is always a possibility), I would have to abandon the original intention of working on the orgasmic reflex. There are two ways of looking at this:

1. It is more important for the patient, at this moment, to work on his anger against the father, than to work on the orgasmic reflex. If this is the case, then the therapist must of course follow the client's expressed needs rather than follow long-term aims.

2. The father-theme is maintained in the foreground, because the client does not want to face other associations. In this case, the father-theme is in fact a defence. When the father theme is used as a defence, I assume that it is not yet the moment to focus on the subject, and that the material the client is running away from is a more relevant topic. For example, it is often easier to work with the need of a male client for physical contact with his father *after* he has worked on his homosexuality. Maybe the orgasmic reflex work is now leading us straight to some homosexual fantasies. The client tries to focus my attention on the also very important subject of what his father did not give him, with the hope that once this is solved, the homosexual problem will be solved... and therefore can be entirely avoided. In my experience, no subject can be avoided, and all must be faced. Personally, I follow Reich's suggestion that it is impossible to work on the deeper and oldest problems efficiently as long as one has not tackled the more recent issues.

Most of my clients require a middle of the road approach. They need more space to explore themselves than what can be found in educational therapy, and are not interested in the aims of process psychotherapy. Gerda Boyesen's very flexible techniques are particularly adapted to such people. For example you may do a complete jellyfish process related to a given level (e.g., all the jellyfish exercises I shall describe, but only in slow motion), and then follow whatever material comes up. Working in this way is also useful to deal with 'block therapy', where a client and a therapist see themselves intensively for a short period. Gerda Boyesen and Wilhelm Reich appreciate working this way... probably because their various involvements in training, research, publication and professional politics do not always allow them enough time for long processes. In such 'block therapies', you may aim to accomplish a relevant 'chapter' of a process technique. Such a 'chapter' may be just listening, working repeatedly with a jellyfish exercise, on an armour block, or discussing and clarifying an event in the client's life. Sometimes this is just what a client requires.

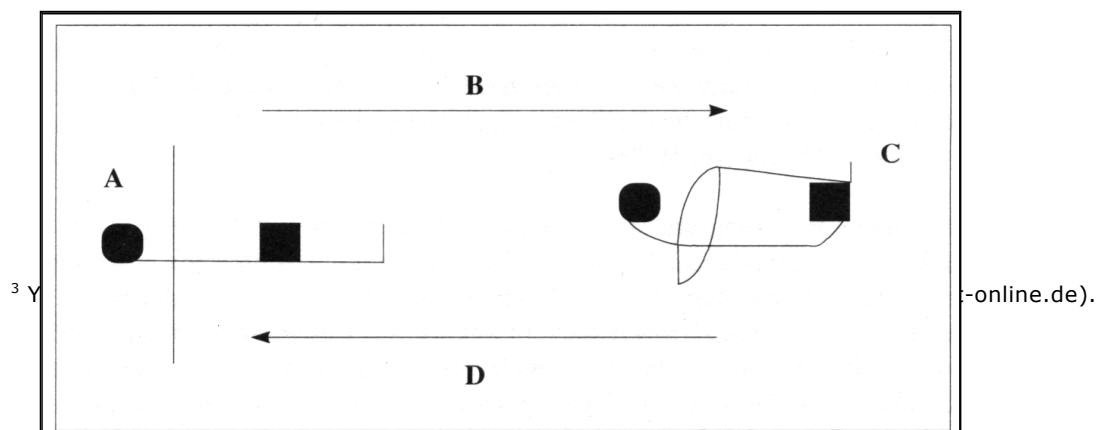
5. The jellyfish process

"The jellyfish is one of Reich's favourite Orgonomy exercise. It is inspired by the pulsatory movements, in water, of unicellular animals such as an amoeba, a protozoan, and a jellyfish. One notices that animals and plants of the sea have similar movements of contraction – expansion ... All our cells have such an alternate movement, because it is fundamental to the pulsation of all living tissues.

From a therapeutic point of view, the jellyfish exercise aims at increasing our physical and psychological orgone potential. It allows one to come into contact with the more subtle forms of breathing, sensation, and feeling. At a psychological level, amplifying our pulsation opens a way to the vital centres of our consciousness and allows the mind to wander in the domain of transpersonal imagination. Often, people report seeing coloured and moving shapes. These are visualisations of orgone energy and of plasmatic streamings". (Mona-Lisa Boyesen, Biorelease manual)³.

Jellyfish exercises seek to create a regular pulsation between a condensed and an extended body posture, while lying on one's back.

Drawing III: The two extreme positions of the Jellyfish exercises



This ongoing movement is composed of four phases, of which two are extrovert (visible bodily movements), and two introvert (no visible bodily movements):

- A) introvert phase I: maximum extension
- B) extrovert phase I: condensation
- C) introvert phase II: maximum condensation
- D) extrovert phase II: extension

The cycle of movements begins and ends with maximum extension. The four phases are done repeatedly with the basic intent of finding a certain quality, similar to that of breathing: an impression of a general pulsation of the energetic field of our organism. All jellyfish exercises have the following common characteristics:

- 1 Head, arms, and thighs separate each other and away from the trunk on inspiration (phase D & A). This leaves space for the trunk's expansion. The limbs come closer to each other and to the trunk during expiration (phase B & C).
- 2 During those moments when breathing changes direction (introvert phases I & II), there is no visible movement, so that the organism can focus on the inner changes involved.

Phases A and C are not really an immobilisation of breathing and movement:

"The pause is the central mechanism by which a person can recognise their universal being. Neither inhale - nor exhale - but in that moment when there is seemingly no movement - a very peculiar set of self-experience shows up. That is the place where people begin to experience the sense of timelessness. And boundlessness. That place is the recharging place, the place of reconstruction. (Keleman 1979)"

Between inhalation and exhalation, there is an inner opening upwards and backwards, which usually has a strengthening impact... but may also lead to an inner hardness; between exhalation and inhalation, a person often experiences an inner opening downwards and forward, which activates feelings of deep relaxation or depression. This second phase is sometimes associated with the feeling that one falls: one may fall with pleasure or fall in depression. Many authors who studied 'falling anxiety' (Reich and Perls for example) have explored this area.

The repetitive rhythm is of importance to induce a state during which one may have the impression that movements, breathing and sensations 'happen by themselves', that they are animated by a single coherent pulsating force. At the end of a session, I often ask the client to let the exercise become whatever his organism wishes to express now. Finally I ask the client to remain still (at least ten minutes) and feel. When conscious pulsation becomes familiar, it usually continues during this last phase... and after the session.

Remaining still is an important moment in Gerda Boyesen's work, as in other techniques. 'What happens after orgasm' (Heller 1989) is for us something to work on during a session. Gerda Boyesen currently uses the words 'deflux' and 'blue energy' (Gerda Boyesen 1985b) when she talks of these moments:

When you lie down, and remain motionless, "your muscles are in fact still active. An animal that is not moving (for example a dog which has been tied) does not lose his muscle tone".

Lying still during a session with Doctor Olesen, Gerda Boyesen experienced the following feelings:

"As I was resting, I felt energy flowing in my legs and the muscles of my leg became tonic." After several such moments she noticed improvements in her legs. "I developed the following theory: energy itself generates a normal tone and a contraction which allows life to exist. As energy is pulsative and comes in waves, an alternation between contraction

and expansion (relaxation) occurs in the protoplasm. Proteins have also this capacity to contract, to pulsate. (...) This was 'my' theory. And I was very surprised when I realised that Reich had also discovered it, and before me! But afterwards, I found this wonderful as it showed that we were on the same road in our attempt to understand life" (Gerda Boyesen 1985a: 64).

5.1. The spirit of jellyfish

After the Second world war, Ola Raknes was not only one of the main figures of European Vegetotherapy, but also one of Reich's closest collaborator. Gerda Boyesen began a series of sessions in his Oslo practice, in 1947. Her psychotherapy with him lasted until the end of her psychology studies, in 1951. Ola Raknes, was just discovering Reich's Orgonomy:

"The treatment began with words, as Ola Raknes asked me to talk about myself. Then came breathing: imagine you are a jellyfish. And it was with such simple instructions that the dynamic began. Imagine you are a jellyfish... let breathing and movement come..."

"I let my body move with my breathing: my head came forward, my chest hollowed during expiration. It was a pulsative movement. An extremely intense dynamic process began. I was astonished to be allowed to say and do what I felt. Indeed, one of the instructions given by Ola Raknes during the treatment was: "Try to find what you would like to say or do and let it express itself. But if you brake a window, you will have to pay for it!" This last possibility surprised me: I could even brake a window, and not be rejected, I would only be asked to replace it."

5.2. The four phases of breathing mobility of the Reich's Basic Jellyfish

Breathing co-ordinates both amoebae and worm circulations:

- A) Extended & energy in the head: inspiration.
- B) Condensation & energy flowing downwards: breathing out.
- C) Condensed & energy in the feet: expiration.
- D) Extension & energy rising in the back: breathing in.

The exercise is described in a more detailed way in section 7.3.2.

The relations between movement and breathing can in fact be varied, but basically there are mechanical reasons for this relation:

1. Breathing out loosens belly and chest muscles, the belly can be comfortably condensed, and approaching the knees to the chest creates no tension and even helps the relaxation of belly and chest muscles, of the diaphragm and of the lower back.
2. Breathing out usually expends belly and chest. For comfort, this belly movement requires that the knees be further away from the chest.

What follows is a more analytical approach of jellyfish exercises, for practitioners. It is a synthesis between what I learned in the training organised by Gerda Boyesen in the '70s, and developments I have added in my practice since. This analysis does not intend to be exhaustive. Its aim is to show the immense clinical richness contained in what appears to be such a simple movement. Such detailed analysis is only relevant as long as one does not lose sight of the pulsative intention contained in the Basic Jellyfish I have just described.

A jellyfish exercise allows one to work at several layers of a person :

1. Body layer: Doing the movements as a gymnastic exercise.
2. Body / mind layers: Coordinating representations and movement. For example asking a person to associate a colour to each phase of the movement.
3. Body / vegetative layers: Coordinating breathing and movement. We shall discuss these later.
4. The metabolic layer if one is attentive to fatigue, how much oxygen can be taken in and how it metabolized. Being attentive to body sensations after the exercise, heart rate, how breathing regulates itself, etc.
5. Various combinations of these layers.

When working with breathing one usually needs to know Vegetotherapy, mostly on two issues:

1. Being familiar with Reich's segments, to analyze ways of breathing.
2. This work can activate deep emotional discharges, and various reaction systems (orgasm reflex, startle reflex, etc.). It is useful to know how to work with such deep feelings.

5.3. Finding a balance between opening and healing forces

When consciousness attempts to contact deep organismic forces, something occurs that is hard to describe, or understand, but is well documented in most approaches such as Yoga and trance. The coordination of (a) conscious attention, (b) positions of the body and (c) breathing seems to create organismic states that mobilize deep metabolic resources. What emerges is a state that can heal and/or destroy deep layers of the organism. Descriptions of these wonderful states are so numerous that one can assume that what they describe exists. However, scientific research has avoided tackling this issue because it is often associated to spirituality. It is therefore difficult to account for this phenomenon in scientific terms.

This emerging state some time creates what I metaphorically call 'vegetative storms'. Emotions, blood circulation, attention, sensations all seem to become a sort of tornado that mobilizes the whole organism, as in a trance or during orgasm. People who have lived these storms report huge movements of pleasure and/or pain, deep relaxation and (or extreme tension, etc. These movements tend to momentarily relax chronic muscular tensions and mechanisms that inhibit respiration. Images of all sort bloom in the mind, some times old forgotten memories are perceived and even sometimes re-experienced (which is what regression is about).

Loosening the defence system of a patient during a Vegetotherapy process can sometimes lead him in a tunnel of sufferance that seems to be without end, if what was uncovered does not simultaneously receive the support of the healing forces. It One of the reasons why the jellyfish exercises were invented by Reich, was to help a patient carried by a vegetative storm. The exercise is protective because of a combination of factors:

1. There is no intrusion of the therapist (the patient does it).
2. The vegetative abreactions are caused by a simple exercise. This is something the mind can easily handle.
3. The relation between exercise and vegetative abreactions gradually become a predictable association, which allows on a form of mastery over deep experiences. ,
4. The jellyfish exercise can also be used to activate mild vegetative global reactions that seldom go as deep as what Vegetotherapy can activate.

These are some of the reasons why Gerda Boyesen liked these exercises.

Neo-reichians often think that one needs to associate psychological work with organismic processes, so that the patient is not overwhelmed but vegetative storms. However, methods like the jellyfish can also help to strengthen boundaries without necessarily passing through verbalization techniques. After having activated vegetative dynamics, it is not always recommended to verbalize. The practical fine point here, is not to forget that as soon as one focuses on content, arousal can rise dramatically. Often, at the end of a session, a therapist prefers low arousal, as close as possible to relaxation. This is why one usually avoids dealing with content after a jellyfish exercises. If one does not want to cut abruptly the global organismic dynamics activated by a jellyfish exercise, it is advised to listen to whatever the patient wants to say, but to discuss content or propose an interpretation at the beginning of the next session. Discussing content at the end of a session with a person who experiences strong relaxation can create a 'startle reaction'.

The state of relaxation and the state required for intellectualisation make opposing demands on the vegetative system⁴. Relaxation puts the organism in a parasympathetic state, while intellectualization requires a more sympathetic state of the organism. If the organism wants to remain in a parasympathetic state, and needs to put itself simultaneously in a sympathetic state to please the therapist, the ensuing physiological chaos may feed negative vicious circles and transference during the days that follow. Not only can these reactions be harmful, but they can also cause the interruption of the therapeutic relationship. The jellyfish model specifically recommends that patients learn that such forms of activation are detrimental for the development of his organismic regulation mechanisms, and that he should learn to pass from one state to another, rather than to be in both at the same time.

5.4. Reaching for different levels of experience

5.4.1. The dimensions of an organism are coordinated by a great variety of organismic mechanisms

In my way of thinking, dimensions of the organism (thinking, behaving, postural dynamics, metabolism) are connected in a multitude of ways by a great variety of organismic regulation systems (breathing, brain, parasympathetic and sympathetic vegetative systems, cardiovascular irrigation, affects, homeostasis, etc.). Because of this multiplicity of links it is impossible to predict the exact effect of an exercise on physiology, emotions, thoughts, breathing, etc.

The organism is never passive. It has a defence system, is structured in a certain way, has expectations, has developed certain ways of behaving, etc. A good exercise aims at a relatively precise articulation of the dimensions of the organism. The effect of a way of using a jellyfish exercise can be relatively predictable if sound clinical training allows one to evaluate the organismic context within which the exercise is used. These expectations can only be probable, given our poor explicit knowledge of the dynamics of an organism and its dimensions. If one uses the exercise to help a patient to relax, and if the exercise makes him more anxious, therapists will envisage at least two options:

1. The patient has a resistance against relaxation.
2. The exercise has an unexpected effect for an unknown reason.

Both hypotheses can be simultaneously relevant. In all cases the therapist investigates with the patient on his way of integrating the jellyfish exercises, and often finds interesting material. The mistake to avoid is to only envisage the first hypothesis, and of then accusing the patient of resisting the treatment. It may be that the patient's anxiety was triggered by the way the therapist moved a facial muscle and not the exercise, or anything else. There is no way, in the Biodynamic spirit taught by Gerda Boyesen, to work with the assumption that one can always predict what will happen.

5.4.2. Therapeutic intentions

I shall now describe "therapeutic intentions". In body psychotherapy, the therapist proposes an exercise because he expects that it will help the patient to explore certain potential states of his organism. He thus has a "therapeutic intention", or a hypothesis, without which therapeutic interventions would only be a shot in the dark. This hypothesis is based on passed clinical experience, and will be more or less relevant with a given patient at a given moment. By testing a precise hypothesis, the therapist has an angle that allows him to enter in the complex world of his patient with a precise question. The answers provided by the patient will then lead, hopefully, to more explicit questions, and sometimes-even to satisfying explanations.

⁴ The German tend to call it 'vegetative' and the British 'autonomic' system. I will use 'vegetative' because it is Reich's terminology, which explains the close link between the label 'Vegetotherapy' and organismic regulation mechanisms.

To illustrate this therapeutic attitude, I shall now unpack the issues summarized in the previous section. We are in the situation where the therapist proposes a jellyfish exercise with a hypothesis on its impact on a given organism, at a given moment, within the therapeutic practice. However, in this case, the patient is incapable of connecting with the type of experience the therapist was aiming for. Three attitudes are required simultaneously:

1. Due respect for human variety.
2. If, for example, a person is repeatedly provoked emotionally by relaxation exercises, we are learning that our relaxation technique and our client's feelings are not co-ordinated in an adequate way. The client is always 'right' (his well-being is the aim of our work). Talking about what is happening may be a good first reaction.
3. When an exercise influences a client in a particular way, we may ask ourselves why such a reaction occurs. For example, why can a client only relax once he has shouted and pounded, while sitting quietly puts him in an incredible state of anxiety? Exploring such issues is exactly what a body psychotherapist is trained for.

I shall now describe some of the most frequent variables used in a jellyfish process.

5.4.3. Eyes open / eyes closed

Doing an exercise with opened or closed eyes can (although not always) make a big difference. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, leaving the world of the interacting I for that of the intimate self is most easily done with closed eyes. The aim is to become able to feel the intimate self when the interacting I is active. One focuses on one's inner sensations while one is with someone. One can later explore doing the same exercise, in the same spirit, with opened eyes, and thus deepen one's understanding on how a person coordinates the intimate I and the interactive me.

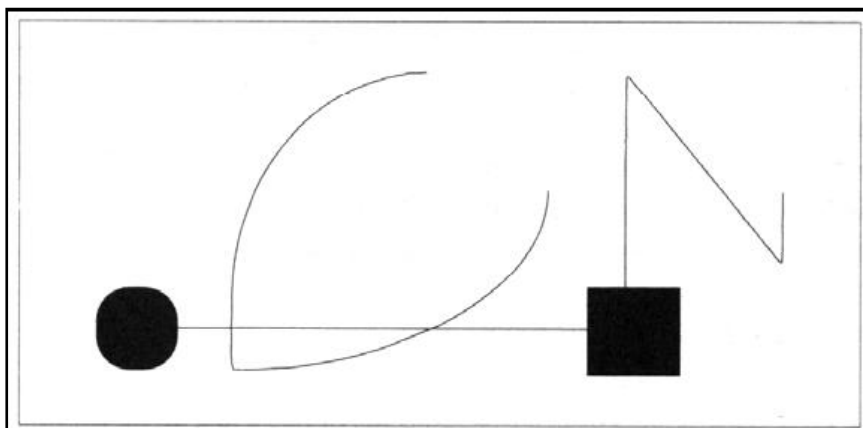
For some people, it may be necessary to start with eyes opened. I mostly think of people who lose contact with what is happening in the room as soon as they close their eyes, and who have a difficulty to readjust to their environment after a session (Heller 1986).

5.4.4. Consciousness + movement = gymnastic

Show an exercise, and ask a person to do the same thing, without mentioning anything about the speed of the movement, or about breathing. Nevertheless, you prevent the person from moving at extreme speeds (fast or slow). Doing a jellyfish this way gives the pleasure of moving in a co-ordinated way, while attention is focused (e.g., on doing the movement correctly). Depths of the person are seldom mobilised when the exercise is done this way. Some of the exercises can be used to strengthen abdominal muscles. If a person is already emotionally provoked at this stage, you should reconsider the initial therapeutic intentions that led you to propose this exercise.

5.4.5. Consciousness + extreme slowness + movement = relaxation

Drawing IV: critical position



I discovered the beauty of moving slowly when I learned to practice Tai Chi Chuan. The exact speed here is as slow as possible, as long as the movement remains constantly visible and smooth. I usually ask my clients to remain in the introvert phases during 3 to 6 breaths. There are several good reasons to work at this level:

1. First of all, it is a good way of learning the movement: one has enough time to explore every detail of the movement. For example, there is a critical position from the point of view of gravity, shown in 'Drawing IV'. While the knees are above the pelvis, the weight of the legs is carried by the lower back. This position has a strong relaxing effect on the lower back. As the legs extend past the critical position, the whole weight distribution around the pelvis is modified. As long as feet do not touch the ground the legs must now be carried mainly by the strength of abdominal muscles who also suddenly create a tension in the whole breathing pattern (e.g. also in the diaphragm movements) and on the spine. Being attentive to what happens when one passes by the 'critical position' may become very interesting, mostly for people who have tensions in the lower back and around the pelvis, and weak or hypotonic abdominal muscles. The capacity not to stop breathing at this moment is a good way to work on the startle tendency to stop breathing as soon as things become complicated in life.
2. Doing a jellyfish slowly is often a good non-provocative relaxation exercise, which on use at home... except, of course, for people who cannot bare slowness. Some people are irritated by slowness. I have some times asked a client to explore his fear of slowness through such an exercise. I was not convinced by the results. I now prefer to use other techniques to explore this problem. First of all, confronting such a client too directly to slowness may be so provocative that he may end up in deep depression and then require an antidepressant to function. Such a detour is not something one can recommend. It cannot be a therapeutic intention. Furthermore, if such exercises become associated with such frightening topics as the fear of boredom, the client might never become able to use slow movement relaxation exercises. While, if this association is not constructed at this moment of the therapeutic process, the client might, once the problem as been worked through, find a lot of benefit in the slow exercises. It would be stupid to create such a limitation in the client's future. We here have an example of how therapy can sometimes create useless and deep problems.
3. It is a good moment for clients to learn to feel the four phases of a jellyfish movement distinctly, and to explore with what inner material they associate themselves. For example, one can ask them what they associate with each phase (colours, sounds, feelings).
4. Finally, deep relaxation is seldom innocent for our unconscious. Passing continuously from extension to condensation has a deep physiological effect on blood circulation and breathing patterns: on the diaphragm and venous return for example. The condensation posture awakens deep abdominal breathing mostly, while the abdominal tensions during the extension tend to mobilise thoracic patterns.

These movements and positions also relate to deep psycho-organic structures:

1. Extension is often associated to the stretch reflex, a feeling of being adult, open, and strong... like a warrior. People who constantly need to have their arms near the trunk, or to play with a part of their body with their hands or to have their legs close to each other, may find this phase disagreeable or challenging.
2. Condensing is often associated with more regressive moods, such as being alone with one self, being a baby or fragility. One must not forget that babies are not able to stretch their legs. When they lay on their back, they can remain comfortable for a long time, using the 'critical position'. It is also the case, for other reasons, in various sexual positions.

Moving slowly during a jellyfish exercise, often relaxes breathing and provides room for a certain opening of the diaphragm, but without involving deep emotions (exercises tend to generate 'vital' levels of experience). At this speed, it is impossible to co-ordinate movement and breathing. It is therefore a useful technique for those who already have an explicit theory on how to co-ordinate breathing and movement (for example people who read this article and tend to use their will-

power). Various observations made during these exercises may lead to themes that require other techniques (visualisation, talking, regression, Vegetotherapy, etc.) to be more fully explored.

5.4.6. Consciousness + movement + breathing = Vegetotherapy

This modality is often used, as it is the junction of Vegetotherapy and Orgonomy. One 'just' asks the client to co-ordinate breathing and movement: expending with inspiration and condensing with expiration. For most people, this instruction is difficult to follow. Some tend to extend while breathing out, suddenly interrupt their jellyfish to follow the instruction, and find themselves doing it wrong again after a few minutes. Others will stop, ask how they are meant to breathe when they expend... Others easily co-ordinate extension and inspiration, but will not do the movement as shown. Their guilt rises each time they do a 'mistake', because they do not realise why it is so difficult to perform what is apparently such a simple task.

These examples show how easily working this way can become irritating and provoking, even if you work as softly and kindly as possible. The irritation can often be associated with two types of irritation:

1. *Irritation due to the limits of attention.* A person can only deal with a few variables simultaneously (usually no more than four). Learning to coordinate several actions requires that some actions be acquired as an automatism before one passes to another. Asking the patient to coordinate movement, breathing and attention at the beginning is way of testing how developed the attention of the patient is, for such matters.
2. *Acquired skills my guide a movement independently from what one is aware of.* Often, the ease with which a patient manages to coordinate all the variables of an exercise depends on his already acquired skills in the management of his organism. Thus every deviation from the exercise informs the therapist on which skills have not yet been developed, and on the location of certain defence patterns.

I strongly advise a therapist working at this level to keep most of his observations for himself, as these would only overload the attention of the patient without providing information on the patient. Often this work leads to deep emotional discharges. People who have a strong organismic problem (for example who just came out of a cancer crisis) will quickly feel bad, and stop. They are quite correct. It is often too soon for them to go in strong emotional work at this stage, and the therapist can thus become aware of these limitations. He may need to explore the organism at lighter levels first, using light verbal or massage techniques. People whose problem are mostly psychological (for example cognitive problems as those discussed in Lazarus's book, or people who need educative psychotherapy) won't be able to execute these exercises, and will talk all the time while doing them... preventing the construction of an organismic emotional charge.

5.4.7. Consciousness + movements following spontaneous breathing dynamics = opening of the diaphragm

The bounds of nature are not the laws of human reason, which do not pursue the true interest and preservation of mankind, but other infinite laws, which regard the eternal order of universal nature, whereof man is an atom. (Spinoza 1677b, II.8: 294f)

This book assumes that any brain, machine, or other thing that has a mind must be composed of smaller things that cannot think at all:

A mind is too complex to fit the mold of narratives that start out here and end up there; a human intellect depends upon the connections in a tangled web – which simply wouldn't work at all if it were neatly straightened out. (...)No doubt, a mind that wants to change itself could benefit from knowing how it works. But such knowledge might as easily encourage us to wreck ourselves – if we had ways to poke our clumsy mental fingers into the trick circuits of the mind's machinery. (Minsky 1985: 69 & 322)

It is often difficult to enter this level with clients who have not experienced the previous level except with people who are already in a clear energetic problem. Here

the client uses the exercise to show the therapist how he breathes spontaneously. There are several important points here:

1. The focus now becomes organismic regulation system. Understanding how organismic events are represented and experienced becomes a secondary centre of interest. One cannot enter in this realm as long as a certain honesty with oneself is not established. Now, certain forms of self-trituration can be brought in front of the court of reason. By self-trituration, I mean certain tendencies to make oneself 'have' deep emotional regressions, 'perfect' breathing, 'beautiful' movements... This phase of the work requires a capacity to observe *spontaneous* bio-logic forms of coordination. At such moments, I feel entitled to ask my client to stop breathing deeply if it is only done to please statements as those found in this article. In a therapy session nothing can be absolutely spontaneous.
2. Working like this allows the therapist to evaluate where the client is in relation to issues such as willpower, and evaluate the risk of going deeper. Again, we are psychotherapists. If we notice in this process that there are still self-triturations, there is 'no blame'. We just gently come back to more psychological levels, and try to evaluate what is to be done from there. From a counter - transference perspective, it is important that we do not start thinking that client is being a naughty child. He is precisely here so that he gets what he needs... and not 'what he deserves'. This remark may sound obvious or trivial, but one must never forget that therapists are human, and have unconscious dynamics.
3. Another important point is the obvious difficulty of dealing with conscious spontaneous breathing. Doctors who measure blood pressure often take into account that their mere presence, and their patient's anxious attention focused on signs of blood pressure, may influence the result. However, the patient may work on increasing his acceptance of how the organism manifests itself when it is observed. As soon as I pay attention to how I breathe, my breathing patterns automatically change. If a client has no tolerance for himself, and is obsessive about doing the exercise in a given way, he will be incapable of working at this level. For example, he will become irritated to notice that every time he pays attention to his breathing, it changes. As long as the mind approaches the depths of the organism without tolerance, it is useless to try to go deeper. The opening of this tolerance for oneself is a theme for which Gerda Boyesen has often fought in the groups I have seen here work with. Willpower can be destructive, if it is allowed to enter directly in our deep self. As we participate actively, through such exercises, in the meeting of our client's consciousness and his depth, we have the responsibility of not opening certain doors that should remain closed. Gerda Boyesen often points out that it is useless to dissolve tensions situated at the periphery of the body, if the cost is creating a tension in deep layers of the body that cannot be reached by massage or classical psychotherapy. For example if we put the diaphragm movements in contact with a willpower which cannot tolerate that things happen differently from what it believes in, this willpower will create startle reactions in the diaphragm, that may not disappear in the future. The same phenomenon is observed with a 'sit straight' willpower, which creates tensions in the back muscle. These tensions are bad enough, as they generate permanent deformation of the spine, which are nearly impossible to change in an adult body. Yet, in the case of a bad back, a physiotherapist has an easy access to all the cogwheels involved in this mechanical problem. If now the same 'sit straight' willpower learns from this article that the diaphragm should pulsate in a given manner, and if it also has a concrete access to the diaphragm, it will create these tensions which no massage can then dissolve. This is why one should be very clear about a) when a therapist contacts a certain level of the organism, and b) with whom.

A technique I often used at this level to open up tolerance and kindness for oneself, invented in Jay Stattman's school, is 'mirror breathing'. I put a mirror in front of the client's mouth, and ask him to blur the mirror with his breath. This can only be done by opening the throat in a soft way, and breathing softly but powerfully from there. Such a way of breathing is often accompanied by a feeling of sweetness that spreads in the chest. One then asks the client a tricky thing: to do the jellyfish with spontaneous mirror breathing. For some people this is easy.

Learning to accept one's bodily manifestation requires that one accepts that the laws followed by the organism cannot be reduced to those a mind can grasp. The mind needs, for example, to accept to follow certain paradoxal procedures that develop a form of *kind subtlety*. Reason will need to use a form of fuzzy logic (MacNeill & Freiburger 1993) that does not necessarily follow the linear procedures of currently used logical thinking. Reason may have to accept to 'cheat a bit', and thus

bypass current forms of thinking which prevent conscious thinking from perceiving some previously hidden layers of organismic dynamics.

Mirror breathing, for example, may become spontaneous in the same way as when one spontaneously plays beautiful music: it is an acquired form of spontaneity, which always involves deep psycho-organic mechanisms. Such spontaneous mirror breathing is thus a good way of assessing the capacity of a person's willpower to enter the fragility of our deeper self without destroying everything it meets.

5.4.8. Consciousness + breathing ----> movement = Orgonomy

The client is now asked to let his spontaneous breathing create the pulsation of the movement. When the trunk expands in all directions (and do not forget lateral breathing which becomes very important at this stage), it pushes chin, arms and legs away; when the trunk contracts it attracts chin, pelvis, arms and legs around the navel. If his breathing in this way can move a person, the diaphragm will inevitably be involved in the process, and the experience of being moved by the pulsation of the field one is, will appear quasi automatically. As pointed out by Rudolph Steiner (1951), when this occurs, the client moves effortlessly. If he shows quick signs of fatigue, something is not quite ready in the person for this exercise. Attention, at this stage, can only be a floating one: consciousness is no more an impulse generating the movement; it is free to plunge in the beautiful oceanic sensations that often surround it now, while movements smoothly repeat themselves.

5.4.9. Pulsation ---> breathing ---> movement + consciousness = capacity for auto regulation

A client seldom remains with us until this stage, but it nevertheless happens. It is therefore impossible to provide a general description of what may happen at this stage. Pulsation has become a familiar feeling. The pulsation modulates the breathing that pushes and attracts the periphery of the body, while consciousness is free to swim in the oceanic depths of the being as a wild and powerful ray fish. The inner images that rise to the surface of our mind are often terribly beautiful... even when they are painful.

5.5. Striving for perfection

The general reichian stance is that any healthy person can easily learn the jellyfish exercises, because it corresponds to an innate fundamental movement. I am not sure I quite agree with this position. Be it in bodily techniques (for example martial arts) or arts (dance), practitioners usually discover that spontaneous movements seldom correspond to what one would expect from a purely biological perspective. To summarise briefly my position (Heller 1992), I would say that from the start, behaviour is not even meant to relate to purely biologic laws (e.g., biomechanics). Its functions are also psychological, relational, and social. Each level follows different type of procedures and each of these dimensions have to be taken into account by our behaviour. As these levels seldom make congruent demands on the organism, it would be pathological if our organism could only function according to the demands of one of these levels. A person who does jellyfish exercises perfectly from the start might be someone who perceives perfectly his psychobiological dimension without being able to adapt his behaviour to the requirements of other levels of reality. This is necessarily dangerous for this person's capacity to adapt to circumstances. Such a person can only survive in such environments as monasteries or psychiatric hospitals. Even for Reich, individuals must often fight to have a public relationship with a person one can have an orgasmic experience with. There are maybe societies in which the capacity for such 'biological behaviour' is developed since childhood. I do not see this obviously as a demonstration that the individuals of this culture are 'more' developed than individuals of other cultures, as I believe that fundamental to human freedom is the fact that no individual can develop all that is potential in him during a single life. We have too many possibilities. Thus an individual who has developed his orgasmic potential might very well have underdeveloped other aspects of himself.

Even if it could be proven that Reich had a 'genital character structure', I am not sure I would want to be like him. I admire artists like Beethoven or Van Gogh more than I admire Reich. Yet they may have died without having had a single sexual experience, and therefore without having experienced a single orgasmic sexual interaction. Even Reich admired these artists, and their contact with the forces of life.

My basic stance on this issue is that organisms grow with innate mechanisms that are designed to be able to calibrate in function of their environment. The initial organismic structure is necessarily an open affair, which requires training to shape itself. The innate mechanisms which spontaneously coordinate movements, breathing and impressions function, but are not particularly efficient. This is because they are designed to calibrate with the help of socially constructed teaching systems. The genius of nature, in the case mammals, is that it created mechanisms that are (a) messily designed, but (b) designed in such a way that some training is always necessary. Social systems⁵ can perceive more precisely than genes create million of years ago exactly what sort of adjustment is required at a given moment for a given organism. A person's organism calibrates in function of behaviours that are often used. This is the main calibration criterion: the more often and the more intensely you do something, the more influential it becomes for organismic regulation systems.

Nearly everybody can sing, but only a lot of training allows a person to sing with virtuosity. The same can be said of sexuality. Being able to engage in an orgasmic sexual encounter is thus an art, not a required behaviour for current biological and social needs. Having orgasms is as useless, biologically speaking, as becoming an opera singer. This is even truer today, when there are too many humans on the planet. Only people who make love regularly, in constructive situations, can improve their way of communicating sexually. I use the same argument for jellyfish exercises in psychotherapy. I do not expect people to do these exercises perfectly, even at the end of a process, and I do not consider them 'ill' because of these imperfections. Perfection is a human dream, generated by conscious forms of thinking that tend to caricature the dynamics of nature, not something that can be achieved. To need perfection is often a sign of madness. If I have the impression that a person needs to connect his behaviour to biological requirements, I hope for this person's sake that she has enough structure not to spontaneously know how to behave 'biologically'. The jellyfish is thus one of the many exercises one can use to calibrate certain organismic capacities that may be needed in a certain context, but which were not sufficiently practiced in the past to find a relevant way of functioning.

With many people, if I start with the main jellyfish exercise as I have just described it, they will quickly end up discouraged of not being able to do what is apparently such a simple exercise. If this 'simple' exercise really does relate to a fundamental movement of the organism, then it must in fact be a fantastically clever formula to reach a very complex mechanism - so complex that no laboratories in the world are yet able to describe it. How can I ask an individual to be more intelligent than all the laboratories of the world? Such demands are maybe plausible in a group exploring how far human potential can be developed, but are irrelevant in a psychotherapy practice.

I do not know who began this trend: Reich, Raknes, or Gerda Boyesen. However, obviously, clients asked therapists of these generations for intermediary exercises that help them to perform the Basic Jellyfish. These intermediary exercises allow the client to become familiar with some of the main mechanisms involved in being a pulsation. Not all the people need to learn them all. I will describe them, as I use them. All these exercises can be done at all the levels I have already described. They will allow me to describe some of the hidden complexities of this apparently simple exercise.

⁵ They, regrettably, only sometimes try to fulfil this mission. Often social systems support some people more than others, and educate some behaviour more than others, in ways that are not always beneficial for individuals or the cultural requirements. This issue is not one that needs to be developed in this article.

6. Jellyfish exercises

6.1. Arms or legs: A

6.1.1. Exercise A.I

The client lies on his back, knees folded, feet flat on the mattress. The distance between the pelvis and the feet allows comfortable pelvic rotation upwards and backwards. Knees are approximately 10 cm. apart, feet are parallel and do not touch:

Phase A. Arms are as wide apart as possible, relaxed, on the mattress. The palm of the hands faces the sky.

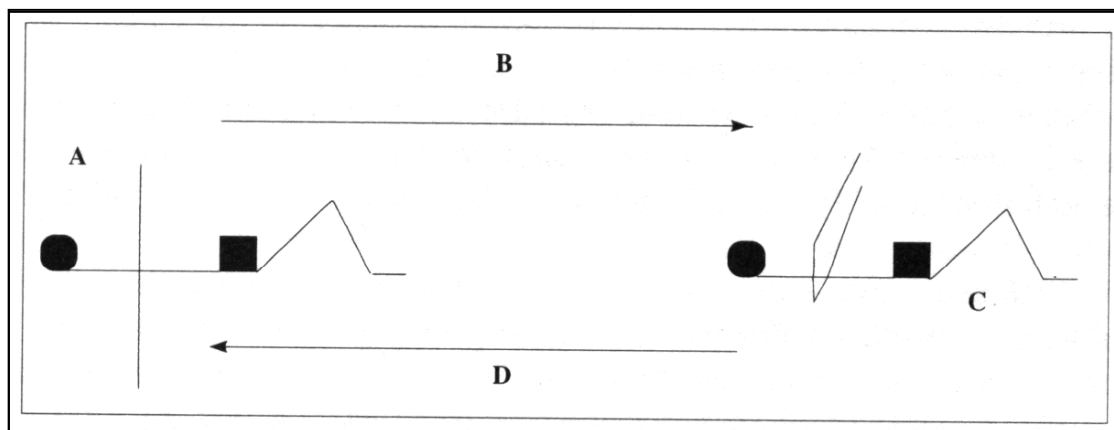
Phase B. Arms rise to the next phase.

Phase C. Arms are stretched forward. Hands nearly touch each other. The fingers are fairly straight, not really apart from each other.

Phase D. Arms separate until they are back to phase A.

Arms and hands remain relatively stretched during the whole exercise. Completely stretched would be too much.

This exercise allows one to explore the chest pulsation, and particularly lateral chest breathing. It is a useful exercise to explore the 'rules of the game' (for example associating each phase to a feeling), because, as it does not involve belly and pelvis, movement and thinking can easily be combined. The movement often creates vibrations in the arms, which can spread to the whole body. If the vibrations do not spread, one can ask the person to feel what stops these vibrations from spreading.



In phase C, one can ask the person to feel a sensation that gives the impression that an energy field forms itself between the hands. This field is nearly always experienced as pulsating. This is an example of what one means by sensing a pulsating field. Then one asks the person until where, in phase C it can feel the energy field, and in phase B when the sensation starts. After a while, most people can feel the energy field connecting the hands in all four phases. When working at the last two levels (organismic work) one can ask the person to let the field move the arms.

Phase B can ask quite a lot of muscular effort. For some people this brings a pleasure connected to the stretching reflex. Others will find this phase tiring, which is often a sign of depressive 'hopelessness' (e.g.: why is life such an effort?). As always, the aim is not to push the client into making an effort. This often brings the therapeutic relationship in hopeless situations, where the therapist feels frustrated because he cannot bring the client out of this hopelessness, and the client feels frustrated because he cannot do what the therapist requires.

Most of the time I do not get involved in a discussion on whether what is experienced as an energetic field really exists. I just notice that conscious impressions tend to find this metaphor a relevant label for what is experienced. On the other hand I am more cautious when a person qualifies this energy with terms such as cosmic,

spiritual or vital. If this type of labelling occurs, I often specify that this may be the organism's energetic field, but that I do not distinguish between different types of energy. I do not distinguish life energy from physical energy any more than I distinguish electrical energy from caloric energy. This issue often appears with patients who have read reichian or neo-reichian literature.

6.1.2. Exercise A.II

The client lies on his back, knees folded, feet flat on the mattress. The distance between the pelvis and the feet allows comfortable grounded pelvic rotation upwards and backwards. Feet and knees are approximately 10 cm. apart:

Phase A: knees are as wide apart as possible, with a relaxed stretching of the thighs.

Phase B: knees rise to the next phase.

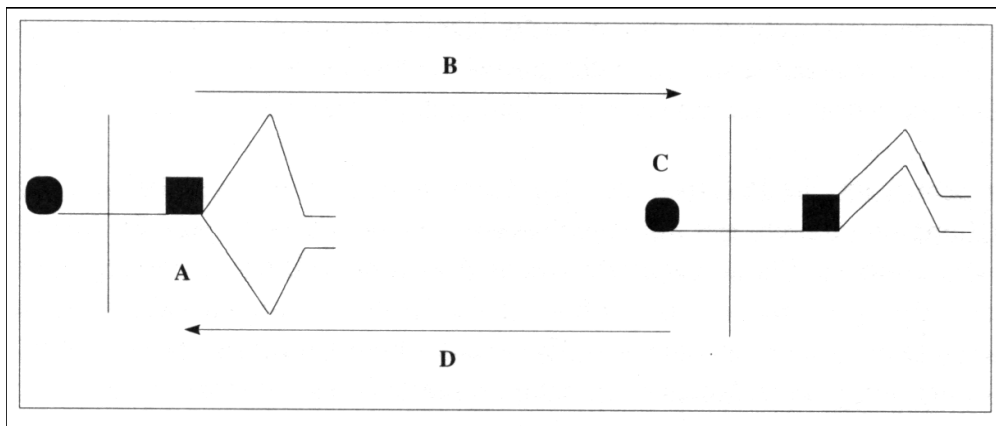
Phase C: knees nearly touch each other.

Phase D: knees separate until they are back to phase A.

Once the feet have found their place on the mattress, they should not displace themselves, although they will inevitably change position *within* the space they rest on. Arms can be anywhere, relaxed. If a person needs to touch himself all the time, and if you want to work on this, then you ask the client not to touch the trunk with arms and hands (for example as on drawing VI).

Of all the jellyfish exercises, this is the most often used one in Biodynamic Psychology. Probably because its effects can be spectacular, polyvalent, and fairly stable. Whatever way you do it, it often brings you back to the Vegetotherapy level, or includes this level in whatever layer of a person you are working with: it creates strong vibrations in the legs, which tend to spread upwards. You will immediately notice if a person has problems to contain (a motoric ego function) id forces: vibrations may become so strong that the person will become unable to continue the exercise for more than five minutes. If this is the case, it is useful to continue the process by first of all working on the capacity of the client to contain (for example using holding or grounding techniques).

Drawing VI: exercise A.II.



If you think in terms of armoured / psychotic personalities, this exercise allows a quick diagnostic. Rigid people (what Gerda Boyesen calls 'stone personalities') will not have any vibrations however long you do this exercise. A psychotic, or what Gerda Boyesen calls a 'troubled sunshine personality', will start having them nearly at once. Associating this form or openness to organismic reactions to psychosis is only useful if it is confirmed by other observations. People who are not psychotics, but who are already familiar with this type of work, may also easily enter in such enter such trance states.

It is also a very good exercise to tackle sexological problems (e.g. any form of vaginal chronic tension). I know that it is used in several sexological medical departments at a gymnastic level.

It is essential that after such deep psychophysiological arousal, a client has time to express and then digest whatever comes to the surface.

Here again one tends to forget to work on the lateral pulsation that this exercise creates in the lower abdomen, in the pelvis, and in the perineum.

6.1.3. Application

These are examples of instructions that can be given during the exercises.

6.1.3.1. First sequence

Lie down on your back, legs folded and slightly parted, feet on the ground (at approximately 30 centimetres from the buttock). Move your pelvis up and down to check that your feet are grounded at a comfortable distance from the pelvis. During expiration let your knees move away from each other gently. When they are as close as possible to the ground, try to relax in that position. Then, on in breath, let your legs come close to each other again. Repeat this movement in coordination with breathing: on expiration, legs open; on inspiration, they close themselves (but they never touch, leave a small space in between). You open and close your legs this way alternatively, until you find your own rhythm.

Be conscious of how your breath deepens in your chest, your diaphragm and your belly. You will maybe feel your breathing become mild continuous waves making their way through your body, from belly to throat and from throat to belly. Let your breathing become deeper still, going from lips to sex, from skull to feet, from the sacrum in your back to the front of the pelvis, from shoulders to arms.

Imagine that on expiration you are breathing out all the stress that has accumulated in you, and let inspiration happen by itself, bringing in new energies. You may soon observe that you do not need any more effort to open and close your legs. They 'float' by themselves as they move apart and then come closer. Co-ordinating movement and breathing becomes effortless as they unite and become... a pulsation.

In this state you may feel tingling sensations in different parts of the body (often, first in legs and hands, then around the mouth). See if you can welcome these sensations and if you can allow them to enter deeper in the tissues of your body, so as to let them wander nearly everywhere.

If you want to explore further and deeper organismic states, you may follow the instructions given for the next sequence, which aim (among other things) at deepening the rhythm of your breathing

6.1.3.2. Second sequence

You are now familiar with this pulsating movement of opening and closing your legs, with expiration and inspiration.

For the next step, once your legs are opened, you do not move for a whole respiration. Instead of bringing your legs back during the first inspiration, you let them rest and relax until the end of the expiration. At the next inspiration, you let your legs 'float' back to the closed position. Then, you let them open again at the next expiration (as in the previous sequence). There is a complete respiration in the open position, but not in the closed position. To rest in the opened position, often deepens the relaxation and amplifies processes connected with discharge.

6.1.3.3. Third sequence

After having done the second sequence three or four minutes, you may also introduce a complete respiration during the closed position. Expire during the closed position. Rest during a complete respiration, and open your legs during the next expira-

tion. Then you rest again, for a whole respiration, while the legs are opened. At the next inspiration you close your legs. Rest during a complete respiration in the closed position, then separate your legs, etc... Repeat this during three or four minutes. To rest in the closed position often increases the vitalisation process and recharging.

6.1.3.4. Experiential issues

During or after the jellyfish exercise, you may experience stronger sensations of streamings and tingles, and often the muscular tissues start to vibrate. These vibrations indicate that muscular tensions are dissolving and are an expression of a bigger energy circulation and of plasmatic currents. These are vegetative motions.

See if can you let yourself go with these vibrations and allow them to express themselves. Nevertheless, be attentive not to force them in any way. As they are agreeable and make you feel more alive, some people tend to accentuate them to make them become stronger and more vigorous. This will in fact hinder the healing process because it will diminish the plasmatic currents.

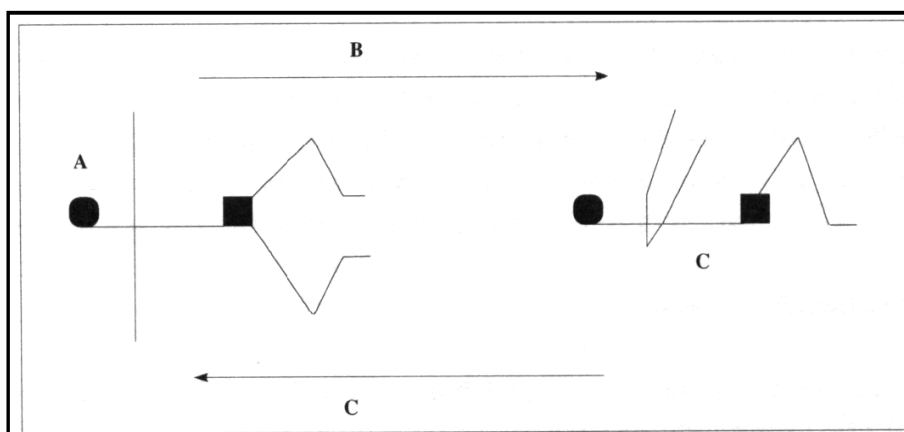
You may also choose to explore vibrations and other bodily expressions of plasmatic currents. You will then enter in a completely different realm of sensations. If you let these invisible vibrations and plasmatic currents express themselves as they wish, you will feel (with surprise) that the currants increase, and sometimes become so strong that they become spontaneous bodily movements.

These movements can be frightening at the beginning, but they are all instinctive responses that have been inhibited or denied during childhood as expressions of life. These often jerky and noisy movements are fundamental orgasmic pleasurable movements that need to express themselves fully. They may therefore bring feelings of pleasure and anxiety. The aim of the process is to become able to welcome these emotions and to become familiar with their expressions as much as you can and as much as you dare to let yourself go!

6.2. Arms and legs together: B

6.2.1. Exercise B.I

Drawing VI: exercise B.I.



Knees and feet never touch. This exercise combines exercises A.I & A.II. One fine point: arms and legs do not cover the same distance; yet they must nevertheless arrive at the extreme positions simultaneously... so that they move at different speeds. This exercise is the first in which one may explore the relative independence between the holistic impressions of a pulsation created through parts of the body

that function differently. Another important point that can be explored with these exercises, is the lateral pulsation of the whole body (becoming able to take one's place in a relaxed way in the world).

6.3. Exercise B.II

With this exercise, one really starts to enter the realm of jellyfish. The whole body is involved, and it takes a round shape, so that one can really think in terms of a jellyfish pulsating. One can imagine that the space created by arms, trunk, and legs is a jellyfish pulsation. These exercises cannot be comfortably used with people who have a fat belly.

Knees and feet never touch. Hands rest relaxed on the knees, they make little effort and are mostly moved by the legs. The intensity with which hands participate in the movement can be taken as a sign of how much willpower is being wrongly used in the movement:

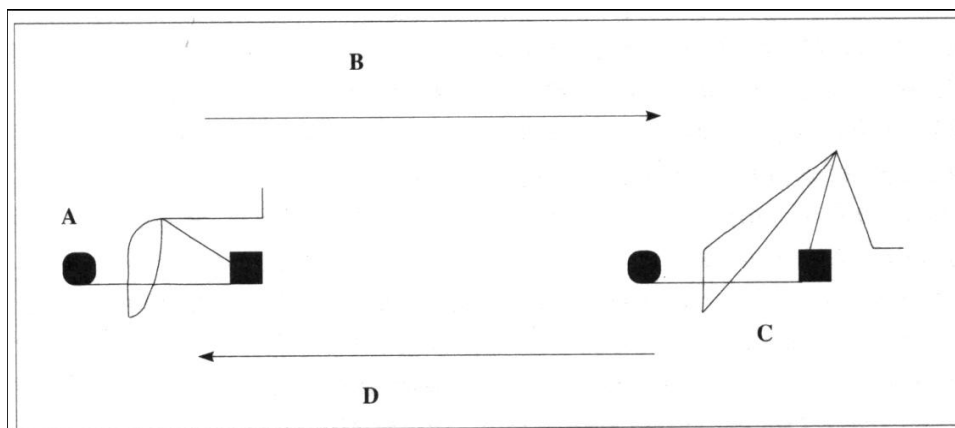
Phase A: knees are not too wide apart, as close as possible to the chest without forcing.

Phase B: Knees go as far away as possible from the chest moving forward until the arms are stretched, and hands will not be able to remain comfortably on the knees.

Phase C: legs and feet are parallel, nearly touching, hands and arms relaxed. This position comes close to the 'critical position', but does not extend as far. Nevertheless, the position of the legs may already create a slight tension in shoulders and neck. People with long arms may reach the critical position by following these instructions. They should avoid going that far.

Phase D: Back to phase A. This movement pulls gently the pelvis upwards, and thighs press a bit on the belly (especially with people on the fat side). Nevertheless, as soon as arms need to use most of their strength (a little bit of strength is nevertheless required at the end of the movement), the movement should stop. Although one should no insist too much on this point, you may ask your client not to separate the knees too much (maximum is as wide as the trunk, up to a distance of 10 cm. between the knees).

Drawing VII: exercise B.II.



One of the fine points that can be worked on from here, is the relation between pelvic movements and neck. To summarise, muscles along the spine can be thought of as parallel elastics (one on each side of the spine) connecting the head to the pelvis⁶. As knees approach the chest, one would expect these back muscles (if they are

⁶ This type of muscular organization is known as « muscular chains » in physiotherapy. Muscular chains and the mechanics of the skeletal are the basis of biomechanical laws, that all begin with the following statement: if they are no hyper- or hypo-tonic tension and if the spine has no deviations, then ... Having these laws lets the physiotherapist assume that a body should be able to behave in a certain way. He can thus easily detect where deviations from the ideal muscular tone and skeletal shape. However not all are considered pathological, as they are often required accommodation to a style of life. Similarly, these laws are used in the analysis of a jellyfish performance as ways of detecting tensions, but not all these tensions need to be worked through in psychotherapy. Deciding that a body psychotherapy needs aims at

not to tense) to pull the head slightly backwards. As knees approach the critical position (see drawing IV), this pull should become weaker, and the chin should have the tendency to come slightly closer to the chest as the back muscles relax. This movement is a fine and soft one, but an important one from a Reichian perspective: it is the pelvis movement that moves the spine (a point already mentioned about exercise A.III), and the movement of the spine moves the head. People with a lot of willpower tend to do the opposite: a strong stretch of the neck (if the impulse comes from the chin there is even more willpower involved) will tense the back muscles and move the spine, and finally pull the pelvis backwards... this movement leads the body into the anti-orgastic reflex. If people tend to do this, you may work for a few sessions with this exercise. At first you ask your client to explore the exercise as he spontaneously does it, and explore the material (it can even be a certain form of well being) which comes. Then you explore the other possibilities, going slowly towards the 'correct' exercise (this, on the other hand, may bring at first uncomfortable material).

Another fine point, related to the first one, is what part of the body does most of the work: the arms, or the pelvis.

Phase D should⁷ also induce, with expiration, a downward movement of the chest as head tilts backward; while phase B should widen in all directions (sideways and upward) chest and belly. If this movement does not occur, you have an indication for some Vegetotherapy work on what ever tensions prevent this movement from occurring.

6.3.1. Exercise B.III

Knees and feet never touch. Hands rest relaxed on the knees, they make little effort and are mostly moved by the legs:

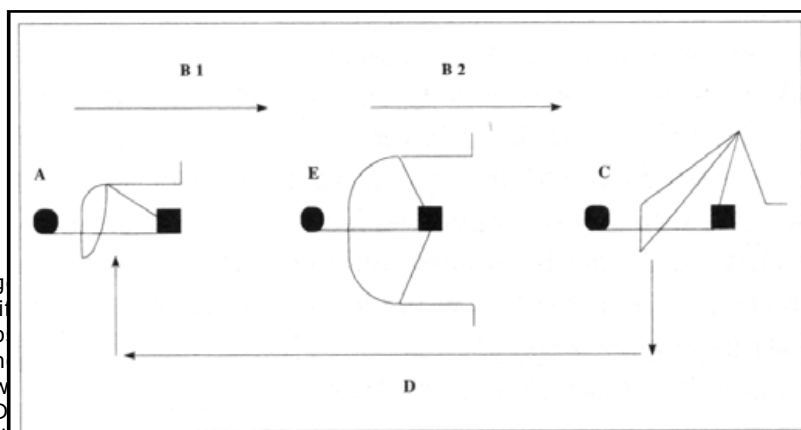
Phase A: knees are not too wide apart, as close as possible to the chest without forcing (as in exercise B.II).

Phase B: Knees go as far away as possible from the chest and from each other... until the moment when the arms are stretched, and hands will not be able to remain comfortably on the knees. The circle is as wide as possible and ends up exactly at phase C, as in exercise B.II.

Phase C: Legs and feet are parallel, close to each other (but do not touch) above the sexual area, hands and arms relaxed. The position of the leg creates a slight pulling of shoulders and neck (as in exercise B.II).

Phase D: Back to phase A. This movement pulls gently the pelvis upwards, and thighs press a bit on the belly. Nevertheless, as soon as arms need to use their strength, the movement stops. Although one should no insist too much on this point, you may ask your client not to separate the knees too much (maximum is as wide as the trunk, up to a distance of 10cm. between the knees is better (as in exercise B.II).

Drawing VIII: exercise B.III.



g
li
p
n
w
D

the aim of a psychotherapy remains the capacity to love who one is and who others are, not one should become.

⁷ This an example where the 'should' refers to biomechanical laws. (see footnote 3)

for why defenses are required in or omnipotence by transforming a therapy as a diagnostic tool. I shall could' be able to move in a certain affirmation, not a therapeutic aim. interesting discussions, but for me

Here again there is an asymmetry of speed due to the shape of our body, as phase B covers a greater distance than phase D. If, when breathing, the two phases are done at different speed a general pulsation experience may nevertheless emerge. Once again one can work on a movement that conveys an impression of being a harmonious holistic entity that contains movements that have different speeds and qualities. This topic does not arise when movement is not co-ordinated with breathing.

This issue introduces the topic of one's capacity to 'change gear' while remaining in pulsating atmosphere. Most people have a fuzzy vision of relaxation, reducing it to a sort of hypotonic state of beatitude or a sea of endorphins. All schools of relaxation agree that this may be a good way of entering the world of relaxation, but a very limited one to remain in. This is the place to remind your client that the aim of relaxation is tone, not hypotone. It is also a place to begin with the theme of introducing pulsation within one's current behaviour.

One of these small details that make all the difference, is the movement of the elbows: if they are relaxed they move away from the trunk (lateral pulsation) as legs circle away from it. At this exact moment, clients often report a feeling of power. As in the next exercises, expiration, expansion, should be associated with a feeling of taking whatever space one needs in the room one is doing this exercise in.

More work on chest and neck loosening in relation to pelvic movements can be introduced here.

6.3.2. Exercise B.II' and B.III'

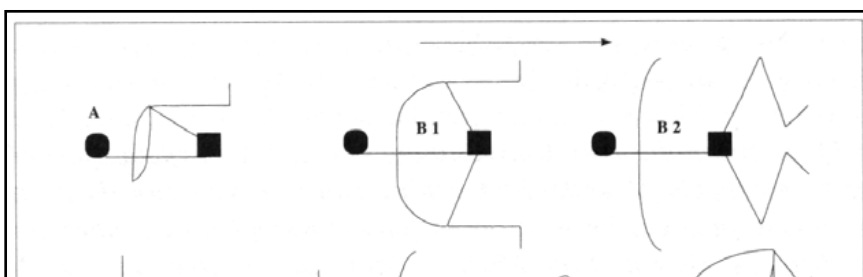
The same as B.II & B.III but this time, as in Reich's Basic Jellyfish, the head also goes towards knees. What is important here, as explained by Reich, is that the movement comes from the middle of the back. The upper trunk moves upward, and the lower trunk also slightly upwards. It is for the client to find how he manages to do the movement so that the impulse starts in the spine, right under the solar plexus. This movement should be done ultimately with no effort of hands and arms, only small tensions in the neck, and no tension in the jaws... all the effort is in the trunk. While B.II & B.III works on a relaxed neck and its connection with the pelvis, the work is now more focused on the flexibility of the spine (in coordination with the plexus solaris and the diaphragm) and the rib cage.

This jellyfish exercise is seldom used today, because it goes against biomechanical rules, which recommend that the head tilt backwards when the pelvis advances. However, Reich was working on orgasm, not on biomechanical requirements. The need to hug and kiss the other while penetration is active maybe an instinctually organized source of pleasure. I therefore suggest that both postures can be analyzed, to distinguish biomechanical laws from instinctual propensions.

6.4. The Global Jellyfish: C

6.4.1. Exercises C.I & C.I'

Drawing IX: exercise C.I.



Knees and feet never touch each other. Hands rest relaxed on the knees, they make little effort and are mostly moved by the legs:

Phase A: knees are not too wide apart, as close as possible to the chest without forcing (as in exercise B.II).

Phase B: knees go as far away as possible from the chest... until the moment when the arms are stretched, and hands will not be able to remain comfortably on the knees. Then the circle continues as arms, remain curved, and your back at phase C. While this is happening, the feet touch the ground (B2) and slide towards phase C. Feet and hands should contact the ground simultaneously.

Phase C: arms and legs lie stretched but relax.

Phase D: feet slide towards the pelvis and rise to the critical position (D1 and D2) as arms gently curve towards the knees. Phase D comes back to phase A as in B.II.

A new form of coordination emerges. Up to now, breathing out always accompanies condensation, and breathing in extension. This was possible as long as phase B and D remain fairly short and simple. One can still do this exercise in this way if one does the exercise fairly quickly, but there is another possibility. When knees open past the pelvis towards B2, one expires until C. Then from C to the critical position, you breathe in. The other phases remain the same. During B and D, passing from expiration to inspiration, or from inspiration to expiration is done - if comfortable - continuously, without a breathing pause.

I was astonished to discover that in Sufi dances one also has two types of expiration and two types of inspiration. However, once I began to think about this, it made sense. In a jellyfish exercise, one tends to associate condensation to breathing out; while in Bioenergetics, you also show that expression occurs on expiration... especially when it is assertive and/or aggressive. If you want to hit hard, you shout and exhale. In the Sufi dance I once learned, you bend forward with a sound, surrendering. Then, once you stand straight again, you exhale downwards in the belly, with the type of deep sounds one can also hear in Buddhist monasteries. One can thus distinguish a centring (inner) expiration, from an expansion (expressive) expiration. In the inner expiration the belly does not have enough room for a full inspiration, in the outer expiration the belly is too tense for a complete inspiration.

Similarly, if you do stretching exercises in such techniques as Tai Chi, you will often be asked to stretch breathing in. Here again I distinguish an inner power oriented opening inspiration (you are creating space in your body), and an outward going inspiration closely related to 'cooling down' and 'self control'. In this jellyfish, all types of coordination can be explored.

Whatever way you do this exercise, one should not get lost in its complexity, and end up by co-ordinating all these elements through the simple feeling of pulsating.

C.I' is the same exercise, but head rises, as for B.II' & B.III'.

6.4.2. Exercise C.II: Basic jellyfish

One just goes from phase A to phase C shown on drawing III, as one feels, focusing on the possibility of using the exercise to feel your pulsating self. We are back at the exercise we started with, but maybe not back to where we started.

For many people, just doing the jellyfish at the beginning of body psychotherapy process will not be a very rich experience. However, if one then includes in the same exercise all one has acquired doing the more analytical exercises, one will discover how much one has learned. Comparing an initial Basic Jellyfish exercise with the one you do now shows what I mean, when I say that becoming able to do a bio-logic exercise is a learning process, not something one just 'has'.

7. A typical session

A typical session includes the following phases:

1. small talk
2. the exercise done strictly
3. the client explores what wants to move him
4. ten minutes on the left side of the body
5. small talk

By 'small talk', I mean letting the client say what he has to say, but not making an issue of what is being said. Whatever is being said should just be taken as information and as an expression of a need to talk. The therapist nevertheless lets himself answer humanly, but always in a reassuring way. Sessions structured around the jellyfish exercise are not meant to analyse transference issues. The idea is to let the unconscious emerge through one or several sessions, and to become aware of the nonconscious⁸ mechanisms that influence the whole organism, and therefore its sub-systems such as feelings and thoughts.

The typical session pattern I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter should be the plan a therapist begins the session with. But of course the initial therapeutic intention must remain flexible, and adapt itself to whatever emerges during the session. Nevertheless, if you are already engaged in a jellyfish process you need to be aware of several issues:

1. Jellyfish process is centred on the development of a client's capacity to *self-regulate*. Thus, it is important that the client feels that he can influence the structure of the session.
2. In reichian therapies that the patient does not always know what he needs, and that it is therefore important that the therapist helps him by containing the frame of a session, in such a way that the patient will need to clarify his needs before there is change in the structure of the session. Today therapists tend to remind reichians that they also do not always know what the patient really needs⁹, so that becoming too rigid is also problematic.
3. A client may take refuge in the 'exercise' aspect of the process, feel very happy and bring no deep material. My way of going around this defence is to ask for dreams (body-work nearly always brings dreams... which is one reason why some psychoanalysts have sent me clients to do 'body work' with).

Another issue is what happens if a client brings material that could also be tackled with other methods (Deep Draining, Vegetotherapy, etc.). By default, it is best to stick with whatever method you are using and note down your observations. I always follow a client completely for a session or two... but I do not necessarily encourage a deepening of what comes up. I first of all try to find a jellyfish way of formulating where the client is. All process approaches are fairly wide, and allow reformulations of most problems one usually meets in the language used by a technique. When a therapist changes too quickly from one technique to another, it is often because he does not yet master the flexibility of the technique (this brings us back to the items 1-3). If the need of another type of process really becomes evident, than of course we should follow the client's need. A change of process technique should be a clear step... quasi a reformulation of the previous therapeutic contract. If a therapist does not feel comfortable using a technique, or has the impression that the patient makes him uncomfortable, he probably just needs to discuss things with a supervisor. Most therapists can only use a technique comfortably with certain types of patients.

⁸ The difference between nonconscious and unconscious processes is explained in Heller 2006.

⁹ Reich assumed that a patient's top priority was to become able to have an orgasmic reflex.

8. Conclusion

Doing jellyfish exercises, you will notice that Reich has included in this technique the notion of auto-regulation he developed with Neil (Reich & Neil 1982). The client remains in charge of what his body does. He can plough in his self and avoid what ever he wants. In other words, learning jellyfish exercises is also a way of learning how to explore oneself, to regulate oneself, and to take your own process in your hands.

In this exercise, the social and intimate I defined at the beginning of this article are clearly differentiated. The interacting I is the movement, and in a certain way the therapist is the one who knows what is to be done. Only the intimate I moves the body, and what is done is an obvious compromise between these two aspects of what the client is. Finally, only the client (his intimate self) knows what he feels, and can provide a meaning for each aspect of the movement. I have already mentioned that any systematic deviation in an exercise can be associated to a personal block. How do I know this? Because, some times, I bring such a 'deviation' to the client's consciousness and we talk about it. For example:

1. In jellyfish B.III., the knees enter in a wide circle away from the body while hands rest on the knees... yet elbows stay in contact with the trunk. Such a contact can only be maintained in this position by a muscular contraction. I point this out to the client who quickly sees my point, for it is an obvious one. He then tells me that when he dances, he always keeps his elbows near his trunk and we start talking of what I sometimes call the 'anti-zorba reflex' (not daring to show one's armpits and to spread one's wings in the world). This anti-zorba reflex is well worked on by exercises such as the 'crane' Chi Kung (Shillings & Hinterthür 1991).

2. In the same exercise, a client avoids the two introvert phases: the movement is continuous; there is no rest between inbreath and outbreath, between outbreath and inbreath. Furthermore, the critical point and the position where knees are above the chest are somehow cleverly avoided in a quite *clever* way. I point this out several time. The client understands, does the exercise several times 'correctly' (so he has understood), but quickly 'relapses' in his usual automatism. We talk about this and fairly quickly arrive at the fairly *clever* strategies he has developed to avoid conflicts.

You will notice that my interventions are based on biomechanical issues the patient can evaluate as well as I can. Discussing this base requires a co-construction¹⁰ which coordinates what I have perceived (related to the interactive I) and how the patient experiences what I have perceived (through the intimate self). I do not need to propose an interpretation of what I have observed (e.g., I will not tell the patient that the fact that his elbows remain close to the chest is a sign that he does not dare to take a lot of space), because it is the patient that must find how a behavioural trait enters in the realm of his associations. As I already mentioned, a gesture may be associated to a variety of processes. The therapist cannot guess what association between a specific behaviour and an experience is active at a given moment, without having some information from the patient.

During his last years as a teacher, Jean Piaget said something that is often useful in psychotherapy: every time you explain something to a patient, you prevent him from developing his capacity to discover things by himself¹¹. By following this piece of wisdom, therapist and client both learn together how things associate themselves in the client's unconscious.

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¹⁰ I use this terms as it is defined in Rochat 2001.

¹¹ Quoted from my memories.

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