

# **The History and Development of Body-Psychotherapy: The American Legacy of Wilhelm Reich<sup>1</sup>**

COURTENAY YOUNG

## **Abstract**

This article is an attempt to cover the scope and development of Body-Psychotherapy, from Reich's early work in Europe to the growth of different methods of Body-Psychotherapy, mainly in America, after his death 50 years ago. The author speaks from his personal knowledge of the field, and his acquaintance with many of the people involved. He has trained in, or has experienced, or knows people working in all of these methods, and has attended most of the conferences on Body-Psychotherapy, on both sides of the Atlantic, over the last 15 years.

**Keywords:** Body Psychotherapy, Psychoanalysis, History, Reich, America



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## **Introduction**

In my first essay on the history of Body-Psychotherapy (Young, 2006), I explored the concept of how human society has rejected the body in different ways over 6,000 years of history. The apex of this process that particularly concerned psychotherapy occurred in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of the new science of psychoanalysis, specifically when Freud ignored the earlier work of Pierre Janet and his fascination with how the mind and body interacted. Instead, Freud focused almost exclusively on the client's unconscious mental processes and aspects of the client's psychodynamic history. In the 50 or so years after Janet's first publications in 1885, the role of the body in psychoanalytical therapy thus became increasingly marginalized, until it was eventually excluded. Freud steadily moved away from his original biologically-based libido theory towards the later development of his 'thanatos' theory, and this finally coincided with the eventual expulsion of Wilhelm Reich, the only real advocate of Freud's earlier theories, from the Psychoanalytical Association in 1934. At this point the split from the body became complete and psychoanalysis, and subsequently most of cognitive psychotherapy went its own un-embodied way. I would now like to examine some of the developments that happened within body-oriented psychotherapy after this split.

## **Reich and Psychoanalysis**

Recapitulating a little, an examination of the early work of Wilhelm Reich shows that he had great promise within psychoanalysis. In 1919, at the age of 22, this young Austrian-Hungarian, having already served on the Austrian-Russian front in the First World War, had just started training in Vienna as a medical student. He became enthused by the 'new' science of psychoanalysis and tried to integrate Freud's original concepts of the libido with his own observations, and with his interests in his patients' somatic experiences, disturbances and sexuality. The next year, he was admitted to membership of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, and this was unheard of for an undergraduate: he was obviously considered exceptional. In 1922, he proposed, and in 1924 he took over the direction of, a series of seminars (the Vienna Seminar for Psychoanalytic Therapy): these examined in-depth clinical problems and, for these seminars, he drew on his extensive clinical work as First Clinical Assistant at the Psychoanalytic

Dispensary, under Edward Hitschmann, where he was working with a wide variety of manual labourers, students, farmers, and people with low earnings.

Psychoanalysis, at that time, was still experimenting: trying to find its feet, so to speak. It was rarely accepted within hospitals and clinics. Most patients were 'private' and quite middle-class, as they were the only ones who could afford the fees. Freud had previously abandoned the use of cocaine, hypnosis, and other spurious methods and was then concentrating on free association, dreams and mental imagery, but was still apparently open to suggestions. Reich realized that the fairly chaotic methodology of psychoanalysis led to a great wealth of memories and unconscious material being unearthed, but that no strong feelings were evoked, and furthermore that most of the patients did not get significantly better. Instead, he advocated that in the fortnightly seminars that:

... clinical discussions of the Seminar should be devoted exclusively to a close look at the day-to-day appearance of typical patterns of resistance experienced in actual practice. Such searching analyses of the process of analysis was a startling novelty and involved great demands on the ability of those participating to be self-critical. Reich led the way in this respect by freely admitting to having made many mistakes in the way he handled cases over the previous five years and by basing discussions on examples of characteristic failure situations. (Boadella, 1973, p.39)

This radical new approach to the clinical aspects of psychoanalysis, and the wealth of experience he got from his working-class and artisan clinics, illustrates Reich's youthful genius. It was also effective and creative:

Increasingly Reich was able to show, by clinical examples, that the resistances appeared in the transference as a latent hostility, suspiciousness and mistrust felt towards the analyst. He reasoned that if this hidden layer of negativism was not interpreted relentlessly until the patient became aware of it (and experienced it directly as anger towards, or fear of, the analyst), all other interpretative work aimed at resolving the patient's infantile conflicts was bound to fail. (Ibid, p.39)

This was an attempt to systematize psychoanalysis according to the nature or content of material that was being presented, rather than just on the patient's history or how it was being presented chronologically, and this perspective went to form the foundation of his major work on Character Analysis. He presented these ideas systematically in a seminar in June 1926.

Freud had already had difficulty with Reich's point of view, saying: "Why should you not interpret the material in the order in which it appears? Of course, one has to analyze and interpret incest dreams as soon as they appear" (Reich, 1942, p. 142). So it appeared that few analysts, let alone Freud himself, were prepared to venture into any form of direct confrontation with the patient's repressed negativism.

### **Character Analysis**

In 1927, Reich presented his first major paper on Character Analysis, which is what he called a "therapy of character", rather than an "analysis of symptoms" (Boadella, 1973, p. 41). This was a structured attempt to try and alter a person's typical mode of behaviour and expression by systematic interpretation of their defensive functions. It was very well received and, for many, represented an extremely important development in psychoanalysis, the beginnings of a systematic way of working.

Reich's theory centred around his observations that the defensive 'armouring' of a person's character are both the repressed emotions and the embodied tensions that make up their 'survival' strategy for their childhood conflicts. In energetic terms, this is their "frozen history". Reich asked two questions in this paper: "To what extent is an alteration of character necessary?" and "To what extent can it be brought about?" (Boadella, 1973, p. 43).

Over the next few years, he worked on refining the answers to these questions, and published his first major, and still very significant, book, 'Character Analysis', in 1933. By this time Reich had moved to Germany, living mainly in Berlin, and had set up a number of very popular, quite radical, sex clinics there.

This book, based on his clinical studies with working class people, posited that the cause of a person's neurotic disturbance was in the repression of their natural libido, and that a significant indication of the success of any therapy was in the restoration of the person's capacity for joy in their love life and their work. It also described in detail the various factors that

determine the type of character-defence that a child would have to adopt in order to survive emotionally: the timing of the repression; the extent and intensity; which impulses were frustrated; the ratio between permission and frustration; who was the main agent of frustration; and several possible contradictions in these different frustrations to the child's own unique life impulses.

With this as a major treatise, Body-Psychotherapy (although it was not called that until more than 50 years later) had just begun to emerge out of a previous 50 years of "frozen history" with the ignoring of Pierre Janet's work. Whilst this book on Character Analysis is generally acknowledged as a classic by many different branches of psychotherapy, most of these methods seem to have studiously ignored many of the implications of this work.

By 1933, Reich's theoretical conclusions on the relation between sexuality and anxiety, and his clinical work in dissolving the character rigidities, had pushed him to the boundaries of the psychological realm. With the concept of the 'vaso-motor response', which he had advanced in 'Die Funktion des Orgasmus', he was on the edge of a complex field of psychosomatic phenomena which most analysts preferred to leave alone. ... Reich's characterological work had taught him that the function of the rigid character formation was to bind anxiety. Only those analysts who worked consistently with character-analysis were able to reverse the process and to release the dammed-up anxiety from the character armour. As the techniques of dissolving the armour grew more proficient, the effective release became more pronounced (Boadella, 1973, p.102).

By this time, Reich's explorations had also led him into a number of other areas that made his psychoanalyst colleagues very uncomfortable. His proletarian sex-clinics, and his enthusiasm for communism (mainly because this acknowledged the role of sexuality in social oppression) made him and his work exceedingly unpopular to the very middle-class, conservative and increasingly nervous Psychoanalytical Society, which was largely German & Austrian-based, and which was also beginning to face the rise in popularity of National Socialism. The analysts decided to expel him from their Society, especially after the publication of the first edition of his second book 'The Mass Psychology of Fascism', also published in 1933.

This was a shock, and it was also done rather badly<sup>1</sup>. After this disastrous expulsion from the Psychoanalytical Society in 1934, and, being able to see ‘the writing on the wall’, Reich left Germany and, as he began his European wanderings, he went on to explore other aspects of his psychological, ‘bio-energy’ work and its implications. Most significantly for us, he began to teach other people his method of Body-Psychotherapy, though he called it firstly ‘Character-Analysis’ and later ‘Character-Analytical Vegetotherapy’. The first main person to be so trained in Norway was Ola Raknes, who later directly influenced A.S. Neill, Peter Jones, David Boadella, Gerda Boyesen, and many others.

### **Clinical Work**

The separation between Reich and psychoanalysis became complete when he moved to Norway and decided not to join the Norwegian branch of the Psychoanalytical Society. Thus Body-Psychotherapy had started on its second, more overt, exile from psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Reich was still developing his psychotherapeutic technique in relation to the body, and finding he was having remarkable successes.

Reich was the first analyst, however, to introduce an exhaustive study of just what bodily mechanisms were involved in the dynamics of repression, dissociation or other defences against feeling.

When attention was focused directly on the body in this way he found that it greatly speeded up the process of liberating the repressed effects. The patients he treated in Copenhagen had show the release of *vegetative energy* as the result of consistent work on the character defences. When consistent work on the muscular defences was introduced Reich found that he obtained such vegetative reactions regularly and in a stronger form. (Boadella, 1973, p.116) as above...

However, whilst his original theoretical work on character analysis has significantly influenced psychoanalytic ego-psychology and treatment methodologies, the nature of his body—

oriented clinical work needs a mention here as this 'style' influenced (positively or negatively) many of the people trained in these methods.

... by this time Reich was experimenting with rather powerful, often confrontational, interventions. Once one accepts Reichian theory, it tends to direct one toward a style of working that is similar to his: it is typical to have the client breathe and make expressive movements or sounds. Meanwhile the therapist makes various manipulations to help release the muscular armor. It is often a challenging and invasive process (May, 2005, p. 13).

Reich carried, as we all do, aspects of the trauma within our family of origin: his own story was a tragic one, well told elsewhere (Boadella, 1973: Sharaf, 1983: Mann & Hoffman, 1980: Reich, 1969). One of the results of this was that he was often irascible and confrontational; another that he yearned for, and also feared, intimacy; another that he subsequently became quite paranoid (perhaps justifiably after expulsion from 3 or 4 different countries, several organisations, 2 vicious newspaper campaigns, etc.). For the most part, none of these traits seriously undermined his clinical work, except perhaps to influence his style. He is described as being very caring, and also confrontational: his approach was medical, but also supportive. People wanted therapy with him, but then had some serious reservations about certain incidents (Sharaf, 1983, pp 24-27). The actual techniques in Reichian therapy could be extremely painful, and possibly even humiliating, and they could, quite suddenly, generate feelings of great anger, as well as being therapeutic. The actor Orson Bean very nicely illustrates some of this in a book about his own Reichian therapy with Ellsworth Baker (Bean, 1971). There is also a video, *Room for Happiness*, that has been produced showing interviews with patients and their 'orgonomic' psychiatrists (Young, 2003).

The main Reichian theory predicated that muscular armour contains 'neurotic' locked-up 'energies' and that, by 'breaking down' this armour, they can be released and thus 'freed'. The theory, as it was expressed in therapy, determines a powerful, precise, confrontational approach, typical of the time (and maybe of the man). As we shall see, the application of this theory has been modified considerably in later developments.

Other aspects of Reich's work spread to include, not just a study of human character, but wider socio-political forces, research into natural energy, weather control, nuclear physics, and (through the influence of A.S. Neill) the healthy education of children (Placzek, 1982). These are all more or less directly connected to his starting point in psychotherapy, in a clear developmental sequence, with far-reaching consequences (Boadella, 1973). There are also several other books that give good and different personal insights into the character of this remarkable man (Reich, 1974; Sharaf, 1983; Placzek, 1982, Mann and Hoffman, 1980).

### **Reich in America**

What is possibly significant for Body-Psychotherapy is that, around this time in the mid-1930s, Reich seems to have made very few further direct contributions or developments to the clinical aspects of his therapeutic work. There were many refinements as he developed his 'orgone' theory, and later the Orgone Energy Accumulator. But his main interest and energies in developing clinical work seem to have stopped around about this time. Certainly by 1939, when he left for America, he had begun to experiment with the basic energies of the life force that he was later to call 'Orgone Energy'.

Once in America he started training people in his therapeutic methods as well as in his newer scientific discoveries, and this period certainly represented a great flowering of his research work, but the actual clinical methodologies and treatment methods in psychotherapy remained fairly static. One could argue that there is no point in re-inventing the wheel, or in developing something that works effectively, and there could be some truth in this. Fascinating as the scientific work on the "bions", his "orgone work", the "cloud-buster" developments into weather control, and his understandings about the "emotional plague" are, they are not really directly related to the clinical practice of Body-Psychotherapy, though there are many connections (Boadella, 1973). Thus developments in his clinical psychotherapeutic work were mainly left up to the people he trained, mostly in America, although there was a residue of people left in Europe who developed Body-Psychotherapy differently.<sup>3</sup>

As a direct clinical legacy, Reich left us the concept of character analysis, discussed here in a little detail; the concept of a 'life' or 'body' energy: the free flow of which is essential to good



health, and which can be blocked by unresolved psychological and emotional traumas that are physically manifested in chronic muscular holding patterns. He had developed the concept of muscular 'armouring' and armouring in various 'segments' of the body, and a systematic way of working effectively with these manifestations.

Armouring develops in an orderly fashion, depending on the need to conform, and is segmental in arrangement. It contains the history and meaning of its origin. If it is due to traumatic events, it contains the memory of the events. (Baker, 1967, p. 38)

These various 'armourings' build up to form our basic 'character' type depending on how and when the traumas occurred, whether and how effective the resolution has been, and this pattern resides largely in our unconscious. Systematic analysis of this character pattern, and direct (body) work techniques on the muscular holding patterns, especially when working with the person's breathing pattern, can bring these traumas back to consciousness, where they can begin to be resolved. This is the basis of Reichian Body-Psychotherapy.

Any of Reich's later developments, like the 'orgone energy accumulator', were additional and supplemental to this basis. The accumulator came originally just as an adjunct to one-to-one therapy, especially if there were psychosomatic symptoms, or illness, and for people with 'low energy'. This device was designed to 'accumulate' free flowing life energy into the body of the person sitting within it and this accumulation then helped to boost the person's life energy in their body and soften their pattern of muscular armouring. He even claimed that the energy boost could help to soften cancerous (anti-life) cells and tumours and thus help the body to eliminate them. This claim, though possibly correct, was a fatal mistake.

Following a vicious newspaper campaign, the American Food and Drug Authority (FDA) described this 'claim' or theory as part of the 'advertising' for a 'spurious' cure for cancer, especially as the 'products' (orgone energy accumulators) were being shipped across state lines, and this justified them taking him to court. Reich claimed that a court had no jurisdiction to pronounce on scientific discoveries, refused to attend, and was then imprisoned for contempt of court. The history of his trial, the false accusations, the attempt at his own defence, and the

burning all of his published books in 1956, is tragic, and well documented elsewhere (Boadella, 1973; Sharaf, 1983). He died of heart failure in prison in November, 1957.

### **The Neo-Reichians in America**

Reich trained many people in America in the 1940's and early 1950's. His clients and students were his main source of income. After an initial period in New York, he had moved to the countryside and bought a property in the hills outside Rangeley, Maine that he named 'Organon'. This is still owned by the Wilhelm Reich Trust. He also began to call his work 'Orgonomy'.

Elsworth Baker (Baker, 1976) and the more formalized students of "Medical Orgonomy" like Chester Raphael, Richard Blasband, Charles Konia, et al., after Reich's death have tended to plough pretty much the same furrow, clinically, as Reich did, keeping Reich's central concepts very clearly in focus, to the point of being almost purist, though their work in the several of the other fields that Reich delineated expands steadily<sup>5</sup>. They form the College of Orgonomy<sup>7</sup> and publish in the Journal of Orgonomy.<sup>8</sup>, which has now been published for 40 years. These 'Orgonomists' have also kept much of the original tradition alive, and their web sites are an excellent reference point.<sup>9</sup> Whilst some of their recent developments are quite exciting, they have also had relatively little influence in Body-Psychotherapy outside of their own small closed circles.

I will now focus on the developments in Body-Psychotherapy resulting from Reich, and from these people whom he had trained, mainly in America. The sexual repression of the 1950's suddenly opened up in the 60's and 70's, and this considerably helped to re-establish Reich, as his original 'orgasm theory', where he maintained that the sexual orgasm was the main regulator of emotional tension, suddenly became fashionable. Reich's most significant American 'second-generation' students, in terms of general Body-Psychotherapy, were Alexander Lowen, John Pierrakos, Myron Sharaf, and Reich's grown-up daughter Eva Reich. These 'Body-Psychotherapists' (as I shall call them) mostly all went on to train many others, and they became collectively known as "neo-Reichians" though their own labels such as Bioenergetic-Analysis, Core Energetics, Radix, Gentle Bioenergetics, etc. are more frequently used. David Boadella once produced an interesting "genealogy" of Body-Psychotherapy showing the main lines of influence of

all of these people who now practice Body-Psychotherapy, as well as a comprehensive chronology of ‘Somatic Psychotherapy’ (Boadella, 1999). These people have passed down Reich’s particular legacy to us, albeit somewhat modified, and have all significantly helped to develop Body-Psychotherapy in America.

Many people know of, and have been significantly influenced by, the work of Alexander Lowen. His development of Bioenergetic Analysis (originally with John Pierrakos), his prolific writings (see References), and his long dedication to excellent clinical work, are exemplary. However there were significant changes to Reich’s work:

Lowen and Pierrakos altered Reich’s therapeutic paradigm by de-emphasizing the concept of orgasmic potency and omitting the connections between Reich’s therapy and his studies of orgone energy. (Sharaf, 1983, p. 481)

Lowen had developed additional concepts of “grounding” in therapy, working standing up (rather than lying down on the couch), and opening up the breathing, even using a padded stool to bend the client’s back over. He and his wife later developed the idea of self-help exercises (Lowen & Lowen, 1977). With the innate clarity of his books, he helped to publicize and ‘normalize’ Reich’s clinical vegetotherapy work and opened the way towards Body-Psychotherapy (though it still was not being called that) being considered as reasonably respectable: a necessary and welcome trend given the context of the mid-1950’s vicious newspaper campaign and the bad publicity around Reich’s trial and imprisonment.

After splitting off from Lowen, John Pierrakos became increasingly influenced by the spiritual work of his wife, Eva. She called the guidance that she received ‘Pathwork’. After her untimely death, Pierrakos developed a synthesis of his neo-Reichian therapeutic work from Bioenergetics, this type of spiritually-oriented growth work, his developed capacity to see the human aura, a focus on the pleasure of living, and working in a community setting, that he called “Core Energetics”: facilitating the liberation of the core self (Pierrakos, 1987).

Myron Sharaf himself must be included here because, although he only trained a few people, he was one of those who had had significant therapy with Reich, had been trained by Reich, and had written one of the best biographies about Reich: 'Fury on Earth' (Sharaf, 1983).

Reich's younger daughter from his first marriage, Eva Reich, trained initially as a paediatrician, then married, had a daughter herself, and went on to develop her own therapeutic work with both adults and babies. Much of this centred about promoting home births and working with premature babies in incubators, teaching the mothers of such babies to work with them as well to help their disturbed bonding process by giving the baby "butterfly massage" – a very light touch, much as you would touch a butterfly's wing – to prevent an early energetic contraction from tactile abandonment setting-in and becoming chronic. This she calls this work "Gentle Bioenergetics" or "Gentle Baby Massage" (Reich, 1996). Apart from keeping the spirit of Reich's work very much alive, and inspiring many others with her accounts of Reich's work in America, this is perhaps her unique contribution to Body-Psychotherapy.

She was also one of the pioneers one of the most significant neo-Reichian influences outside the realm of Body-Psychotherapy in the development of more modern theories of 'natural childbirth'. In parallel to Bowlby's classic work on maternal deprivation (Bowlby, 1969), in the 1970s, Ina May Gaskin (Gaskin, 1980) and Eva Reich pioneered natural childbirth in America<sup>10</sup>, paralleling the work people like Sheila Kitzinger<sup>11</sup> and Michel Odent<sup>12</sup> have been doing in Europe.

Reich himself, on the one hand, was openly loving towards children and passionate about their healthy upbringing, his best friend was A.S. Neill the founder of Summerhill School, in Suffolk, UK; and Reich named his 'legacy' as the "Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust Fund. However, his relationships with women were confused and complex. After leaving his first wife Annie and their two children, Eva & Lore, in 1933-4, he longed for another child with Elsa Lindenberg in Norway (Reich, 1994, p. 72 & 224). Yet, shortly after leaving her in August 1939 and whilst still deeply grieving that loss, he met Ilse Ollendorf and she became pregnant almost immediately (Ibid, p. 252) and they married on Christmas Day of that year (Reich, 1969, p. 52). Although she may have had a miscarriage then, she later bore him a son, Peter, in 1944 (Reich, 1974). None of his 'wives' really understood his work, but he worked closely with Eva over several years.

This concludes the list of ‘first-generation’ neo-Reichians. Most of the other neo-Reichians in America had little, if any, direct contact with Wilhelm Reich and might not even classify themselves as neo-Reichian. But much of modern Body-Psychotherapy reflects these first developments, even if people have not trained specifically in (say) Orgonomy or Bioenergetics, for they set a yardstick of very high professional, yet acceptable, standards, a good level of publication, and a solid level of consistency.

### **Third Generation**

Charles “Chuck” Kelley was originally an academic, who became interested in the work of ophthalmologist, William Bates. Bates had developed a method utilizing a number of eye exercises to help people see better without using glasses. Kelley then became very interested in Reich’s work, when he was studying for his PhD in psychology, and particularly Reich’s work on the ‘ocular segment’ with tension around the eyes (Kelley, 1962, 1976). He found many parallels and complements between the Bates Method and Reich’s work on deep emotional release techniques (experienced through therapy with William Thorburn, and later Philip Curcuruto, who had trained with Reich). Kelley then went on to develop his own type of therapeutic work, which he called ‘Radix: Education in Feeling and Purpose’ (Glenn and Müller-Schwefe, 1999), combining Reich’s concepts, the work of vision psychologist Samuel Renshaw, the Bates Method, and also the work at the Synanon therapeutic community.<sup>13</sup> He does not refer to Radix as a form of psychotherapy, but more as a form of education, though many other Body-Psychotherapists use his methods and theories. He started working clinically and training people in the late 1960s, with his wife Erika (Kelley, 1976; Glenn, 1999).

Stanley Keleman, one of the ‘third generation’ (without any direct contact with Reich), trained with Alexander Lowen and with Ola Raknes, in Oslo. He had also studied at the Centre for Religious Studies in Germany, led by Durckheim, as well as receiving a more traditional psychoanalytical training. Like many of the later neo-Reichians, there is an acknowledgement of the power of spirituality in his work, but this is also not significantly emphasized in his clinical practice.

The essence of our work is to remove the blocks to our split-off parts and help us to deepen our contact with ourselves and the world, and to learn how to live with our heightened aliveness. ... The function of the blocks ... is to be constricting to the available energy. Strange as it may seem, the most serious problem does not turn out to be to bring more aliveness to people, but to educate them to deal with the aliveness that they have. (Keleman, 1976, p. 205)

However Keleman's much more substantive contribution to Body-Psychotherapy has been to understand and demonstrate how the concept of blocks and armouring, of energetic flow and constriction, extends not just in the muscles of the body but also into the soft tissues of the body, the viscera. Here he parallels some of Gerda Boyesen's work (Boyesen, 1980) and this is where he differed significantly from Reich. These concepts he illustrated beautifully in his book *Emotional Anatomy*.

Life makes shapes. These shapes are part of an organizing process that embodies emotions, thoughts, and experiences into a structure. This structure, in turn, orders the events of existence. Shapes manifest the process of protoplasmic history finding a personal human shape—conception, embryological development and the structures of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Molecules, cells, organisms, dusters, and colonies are the beginning shapes of life's movement. Later on, a person's shape will be molded by the internal and external experiences of birth, growth, differentiation, relationships, mating, reproducing, workout this process, shape is imprinted by the challenges and stresses of existence. Human shape is marked by love and disappointment. (Keleman, 1986, p. xi)

Ron Kurtz became interested in Body-Psychotherapy through Gestalt therapy and his work in the Human Potential Movement in California. He was a statistical psychologist, teaching at San Francisco State. After being initially attracted by Janov's Primal work, he then experienced work in Rolfing, Bioenergetics, and with Pierrakos, Al Pessa and Moshe Feldenkrais. He began to mix all these influences and developed his own unique, existential style, that he calls Hakomi (Kurtz,

1990). ‘Hakomi’ is a Hopi Indian word that means “How do you stand in relation to these many realms?” or “Who are you?” A very poor description of Hakomi is that it helps the person evoke who they could or should be. It does not interpret character or body position, tensions or holding patterns (like Reichian therapy); but it helps reveal the emotional construct behind these patterns. Just one physical technique is for the therapist to ‘take over’ the client’s tension, or holding pattern, so they can relax and experience another aspect of themselves.

Jack Lee Rosenberg (1996), originally a psychologist and Gestalt therapist working at Esalen,<sup>14</sup> integrated a number of different aspects of bodywork and therapy (Yoga, Bioenergetics, Reichian work, psychoanalysis, transpersonal and object relations psychology) into his “Integrative Body Psychotherapy”. He trains people all over the world and one focus of his work is now with couples and their intimate contacts.

A slightly fuller description of some of these people’s work can be found in the first issue of the United States Association of Body Psychotherapy (USABP) Journal of Body Psychotherapy (Goodrich-Dunn & Greene, 2002) and there are, of course, many others than mentioned here in this ‘third generation’ of Body-Psychotherapists, influenced by Reich but without any direct contact. However, some of these have not trained quite so many other people and therefore their influence is more limited in terms of impact and numbers, though they do, of course, carry other significances.

Several other psychotherapists, contemporary to Reich were also deeply influenced by him, his writings, and his emphasis on the body, particularly Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt Therapy (Clarkson & Mackwen, 1973); Arthur Janov, who launched Primal Therapy (Janov, 1970); and later Stanislav Grof, who called his technique Holotropic Breathwork, (Grof, 1986), though none of these give Reich much credit.

Other people, not connected to Body-Psychotherapy but strongly influenced by Reich’s work, include Frank Zappa, John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Itzhak Perlman, Fritjov Capra, Saul Bellow, Alan Ginsberg, Norman Mailer and William Burroughs, (Mannion, 2002), as well as William Steig<sup>15</sup>, Orson Bean<sup>16</sup> and even Kate Bush<sup>17,18</sup>. These people helped to popularise Reich’s work after his death.

## **Significant Later Developments**

Malcolm Brown, and his wife Katherine Ennis Brown, both influenced by Gestalt psychotherapy, developed a style of body-oriented psychotherapy they called 'Organismic Psychotherapy'. (Brown, 1990) Other influences on the Browns were Charlotte Selver's Sensory Awareness (particularly on Katherine) (Brooks & Selver, 2007), Carl Rogers (2003), Reich, Lowen, and also Boadella (1987) and Boyesen (1980) in London, England. The Browns, more than most, have bridged the transatlantic gap between America and Europe, living and working in England and Italy for several years, moving back to America, and finally relocating in Europe again. They have incorporated some of the 'softer' European body-contact methods as well as working as a couple with groups. More so than many others, they 'discovered' that the touch of the therapist is not neutral and that there are profoundly different effects, depending on whether the therapist is a man or woman. Malcolm Brown focused on different types of 'grounding': Lowen's Bioenergetic work is considered more vertical (Boadella, 1987, p. 104), and horizontal grounding is where more undirected states of feeling and awareness become more allowed by the client as the relationship with the therapist helps to heal any early deprivation in the client (Boadella & Smith, 1986, p. 125-144). Brown developed, and then later abandoned, a "Body Contact" method where the therapist has full face-to-face body contact with the client. He could still be considered as a neo-Reichian, although people like them have developed their Body-Psychotherapy work relatively independently from Reich.

Ilna Rubinfeld, a classic music conductor student at Julliard, had personal work done on her posture with an Alexander Technique therapist. She then studied with Fritz Perls (1951, 1994) in Esalen, where Virginia Satir (1990) and others were beginning to do significant work in the Human Potential Movement and in developing new therapies. She became 'hooked' and later adapted a lot of Moshe Feldenkrais' exercises (1991) weaving these together, with some influences from Selver, Jung and eastern philosophies, into a gentle form of Body-Psychotherapy that she calls the "Rubinfeld Synergy Method" (RSM) (Rubinfeld, 1998). This involves a "listening touch" type of hand contact and has certain similarities to Gerda Boyesen's gentle form of biodynamic massage work (Boyesen, 1980), though coming from completely different sources and directions. She also started to explore self-care for the therapist, an often neglected area. In RSM training, a lot of the emphasis is on practitioner self-care: "Self-care is the first step to client care." (Rubinfeld, 1998: 21). RSM is also the clearest amalgamation of some work from the field



of body therapy combined with a recognized form of psychotherapy to synthesise, or amalgamate, or integrate it all into a new form Body-Psychotherapy.

There are a number of other people involved with a 'body therapy', who have then added in a psychotherapeutic component into the training to make this into a Body-Psychotherapy. Examples include: Jack Painter's (1987) 'Postural Integration', which after the addition, or integration, of Gestalt psychotherapy is now called Psychotherapeutic Postural Integration, and this has just been accepted (in Europe) as a legitimate Body-Psychotherapy.<sup>20</sup> Another example in the USA is Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's Body-Mind Centering, which has been transformed into a Body-Psychotherapy by Susan Aposhyan (Aposhyan, 2004).

Al Pessso, and his wife Diane, developed a Body-Psychotherapy from an entirely different source, dance. From studying movement and emotional expression, the Pessos developed such concepts as 'accommodation', an expression that might satisfy the emotions, and 'the structure', where an ideal parent is created to fill the person's emotional need: they began to realize that they were doing emotional therapeutic work. From this point in the early 1960s, 'Psychomotor' work was created, and since then they have developed 'mappings' of consciousness and resistance, and the style of the work is now a form of inspirational body-oriented psychodrama. Pessso travels widely and has also crossed the transatlantic divide, holding regular workshops and trainings in Europe. He has not published significantly.

A penultimate word on Reich's work in America has to be about Reich's actual legacy: he set up a Trust Fund to 'receive' all copyright fees. A couple of years after his death in prison in 1957, Eva Reich handed over the trusteeship of his home at Organon and all his writings and papers to Mary Higgins, who has since interpreted a clause in Reich's will that his papers should be 'stored' for 50 years, to mean that no-one should be allowed to see them (except her) until this date.<sup>29</sup> This infuriated Eva. However, to Mary Higgins' great credit, she has ensured that all Reich's early and important work has been re-published (by Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and remains easily available and she has also recently started publishing collections of all his early correspondence.<sup>30</sup> The restriction of the trust comes to an end in November 2007, and many people are greatly interested in some of the original orgone energy research material that has not seen the light of day for 50 years or so.

Within Body-Psychotherapy, the nearly direct successor of this ‘Reichian’ heritage, with many of these people as founder members, is the USABP.<sup>31</sup> This currently has between 400-600 practitioner members, holds extremely interesting bi-annual conferences, has a regular newsletter for members, awards a research prize, and publishes an excellent peer-reviewed journal. There are also four university Masters degree programs and one PhD program in “Somatic Psychotherapy” affiliated to the USABP.<sup>32</sup> This solid basis has taken the early theory and practice into professionalism and academic training in a way that gives great hope for the future. There is a gently growing acceptance of body-oriented approaches within the field of psychotherapy.

### **Biographical Note**

Courtenay Young is former General Secretary and President of EABP, a founder member of USABP, a UKCP registered psychotherapist, working both in the NHS and in private practice, in and around Edinburgh, Scotland. He has helped establish Body-Psychotherapy as a scientifically-validated psychotherapy with the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) and has written several articles and chapters in books about Body-Psychotherapy, many of which are available on his website: [www.courtenay-young.com](http://www.courtenay-young.com) He can be contacted by e-mail: [courtenay@courtenay-young.com](mailto:courtenay@courtenay-young.com)

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> His expulsion was described as a “great injustice” by Anna Freud (Boadella, 1973, p. 114).
- <sup>3</sup> To be developed in a later article.
- <sup>5</sup> There is a general requirement to be a qualified medical doctor and a psychiatrist, before training as a Medical Orgonomist, practising Orgonomic therapy.
- <sup>7</sup> College of Orgonomy: [www.orgonomy.org](http://www.orgonomy.org)
- <sup>8</sup> See the Journal of Orgonomy: [www.orgonomy.org/bookstore/listing\\_complete.html](http://www.orgonomy.org/bookstore/listing_complete.html)
- <sup>9</sup> The American College of Orgonomy: [www.orgonomy.org](http://www.orgonomy.org) and Public Orgonomic Research Exchange: [www.orgone.org](http://www.orgone.org)
- <sup>10</sup> I remember her vividly, in a workshop in London in the late 1970s, stating that, as a trained paediatrician, she was often asked but would NOT attend a home birth herself, as she was “trained in pathology” and so would essentially be sitting there waiting for something to go wrong. “You do not want that energy at a home birth.”
- <sup>11</sup> Sheila Kitzinger: The new experience of childbirth; Birth your way; The politics of birth; The politics of breastfeeding; The complete book of pregnancy and childbirth; Safer childbirth? A critical history of maternity care; etc.
- <sup>12</sup> Michel Odent: Birth And Breastfeeding: Rediscovering The Needs Of Women During Pregnancy And Childbirth; The Caesarean; Farmer and the Obstetrician; Birth Reborn; The Scientification of Love; Primal Health: Understanding the Critical Period Between Conception and the First Birthday; Childbirth without Fear : The Principles and Practice of Natural Childbirth.
- <sup>13</sup> A drug treatment center near Santa Monica, California.
- <sup>14</sup> A therapy centre in Big Sur, California, where Humanistic Psychology virtually started, temporary home to Fritz Perls, Stan Grof, and several others, in an idyllic setting overlooking the Pacific Ocean with hot sulphur springs and baths.
- <sup>15</sup> Artist for: Reich, W. (1972) Listen, Little Man! London, Souvenir
- <sup>16</sup> opp cit: References
- <sup>17</sup> Song “Cloudbusting” on “Children of the Night” album
- <sup>18</sup> [www.psychcentral.com/psypsy/Wilhelm\\_Reich](http://www.psychcentral.com/psypsy/Wilhelm_Reich)
- <sup>20</sup> The method was accepted as ‘Scientifically Valid’ in June 2006, and the IFCC school in Strasbourg was accepted as the first European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI) in Body-Psychotherapy, by the European Association of Psychotherapy (EAP) in June 2007.
- <sup>29</sup> Sharaf (1983); p. 480
- <sup>30</sup> Reich’s letters and journals collected by the Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust have been published in 3 volumes so far: Reich, Wilhelm: Passion of Youth (Pre 1934), Beyond Psychology (1934-1939), & American Odyssey (1940-1947) Farrar Straus & Giroux, New York.
- <sup>31</sup> USABP website: [www.usabp.org](http://www.usabp.org)
- <sup>32</sup> At Naropa University, Boulder, CO; CIIS, San Francisco, CA; JFK University, Berkeley, CA and Santa Barbara University, Santa Barbara, CA.