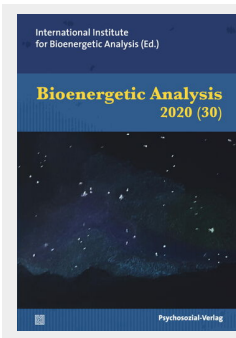


Vita Heinrich-Clauer

Encountering the Shadow



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Encountering the Shadow

Working with Negativity in the Therapeutic Process¹

*Vita Heinrich-Clauer*²

Abstracts

The interacting unconscious in the contact between therapist and client, the (self) sabotage and destructiveness observed as resistance in the contact to oneself and to others, is explained conceptually and illustrated with case studies. Therapeutic techniques will be presented which allow a creative and energizing, vocally expressive handling of the hostility bound up in the introject, in which the patient “embraces” their own shadow. The bases for the practical work are the well-known concepts and interventions of Bioenergetic Analysis, and this perspective is extended by reference to the anatomical-functional and the neurovegetative contexts of vocal expression. The tongue is of particular importance as it is a universal organ of expression for rejection, contempt, aversion as well as for desire. The familiar and the new are placed within a specific therapeutic framework.

Key words: egativity, Gollum, externalization, vocal expression, tongue

Rencontrer l’Ombre. Accéder à la négativité dans le processus thérapeutique (French)

L’inconscient en interaction dans la rencontre entre le thérapeute et le client, l’(au-to)sabotage et la destructivité observés en tant que résistance dans la connexion avec soi-même et aux autres, sont expliqués conceptuellement et sur la base d’études de cas. Nous présenterons des techniques thérapeutiques permettant une gestion créative, énergisante, vocale, de l’hostilité liée à l’introjection, dans laquelle le patient “embrasse” sa propre ombre. Les travaux pratiques reposent sur les concepts et interventions bien connus de l’analyse bioénergétique, ainsi que sur leur élargissement grâce aux perspectives provenant des données anatomo-fonctionnelles et neuro-végétatives en ce qui concerne l’expression vocale. La langue en tant qu’organe universel d’expression tant pour le rejet, le mépris et l’aversion que pour le désir revêt une importance particulière. Le familier et le nouveau sont placés dans un cadre thérapeutique spécifique.

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- 1 Keynote Address delivered to the 25th IIBA Conference in Portugal, May 24th, 2019.
 - 2 This article was originally written in German. The author wishes to thank the translators, Janna Heinrich and Tarek McLeod, for their work.

Encuentro con la sombra. Trabajando con la negatividad en el proceso terapéutico (Spanish)

La interacción inconsciente en el contacto entre terapeuta y cliente, el autosabotaje y destructividad observada como resistencia en el contacto con uno y con los otros, se explica conceptualmente y sobre la base de casos estudiados. Técnicas terapéuticas serán presentadas de un modo que permitan, creativa y energicamente, el manejo expresivo vocal de la hostilidad ligada a la introyección, en la cual el paciente “abrace” su propia sombra. La base para el trabajo práctico son los bien conocidos conceptos e intervenciones del análisis bioenergético así como las extensiones de perspectiva por contextos neurovegetativos anatómicos-funcionales con respecto a la expresión vocal. La lengua como órgano universal de la expresión de rechazo, desprecio, asco, pero también como deseo, es de suma importancia. Lo familiar y lo nuevo se sitúan dentro de un marco terapéutico específico.

Incontrare l'ombra. Lavorare con la negatività nel processo terapeutico (Italian)

L'inconscio che interagisce nel contatto tra terapeuta e paziente, l'(auto) sabotaggio e la distruttività osservati come resistenza nel contatto con se stessi e con gli altri, sono spiegati come concetti e sulla base di casi clinici. Verranno presentate tecniche terapeutiche che consentono un trattamento creativo ed energizzante, vocalmente espressivo dell'ostilità legata all'introyezione, in cui il paziente “abbraccia” la propria ombra. La base del lavoro pratico sono i concetti e gli interventi ben noti dell'analisi bioenergetica, nonché le estensioni prospettiche di contesti anatomico-funzionali e neurovegetativi per quanto riguarda l'espressione vocale. La lingua, come organo universale di espressione di rifiuto, disprezzo, avversione e desiderio, è di particolare importanza. Il familiare e il nuovo sono inseriti in un quadro terapeutico specifico.

Encontro com a Sombra. Trabalhando com a Negatividade no Processo Terapêutico (Portuguese)

O inconsciente interativo no contato entre terapeuta e cliente, a (auto) sabotagem e destrutividade observadas como resistência no contato consigo mesmo e com os outros, é explicado conceitualmente e ilustrado com estudos de caso. Serão apresentadas técnicas terapêuticas que permitem um tratamento verbalmente expressivo, criativo e energizante da hostilidade estreitamente vinculada à introyecção, no qual o paciente “acolhe” sua própria sombra. As bases para o trabalho prático são os conhecidos conceitos e intervenções da Análise Bioenergética, e esta perspectiva é estendida por referência aos contextos anatômico-funcional e neurovegetativo da expressão vocal. A língua é de particular importância, pois é um órgão universal que expressa rejeição, desprezo e aversão, assim como expressa desejo. O familiar e o novo são colocados dentro de uma estrutura terapêutica específica.

Begegnung mit dem Schatten. Die Arbeit mit der Negativität im Therapeutischen Prozess (German)

Das interagierende Unbewusste im Kontakt zwischen Therapeuten_in und Klient_in, die (Selbst-)Sabotage und Destruktivität, die als Widerstand im Kontakt mit einem selbst und mit anderen beobachtet werden können, wird konzeptionell und auf der Basis von Fallstudien erklärt. Therapeutische Techniken werden präsentiert, die ein kreatives und energetisierendes, vokal expressives Handling dieser Feindlichkeit erlauben, das im Introjekt gebunden ist und in dem die Patien_in ihren eigenen Schatten "umarmen".

Встреча с Тенью. работа с негативностью в терапевтическом процессе (Вита Хайнрих-Клауэр) (Russian)

Взаимодействие бессознательного в контакте терапевта и клиента может проявляться как (само)саботаж и деструктивность. Мы видим их как сопротивление в контакте с собой и с другими. Эти явления будут объяснены в статье концептуально и на конкретных примерах. Также будут представлены терапевтические техники, которые позволяют справиться с этой враждебностью, которая привязана к интроекту, с помощью творческого, звуко-экспрессивного, заряжающего энергией подхода. В результате пациент "открывается" своей собственной тени. Основу практической работы составляют известные нам концепции и интервенции биоэнергетического анализа, дополненные анатомо-функциональными, нейровегетативными аспектами работы с голосовым выражением. Язык как универсальный орган выражения отвержения, презрения, отвращения, а также желания имеет особую важность в этой работе. Известные нам техники и новые подходы помещаются в рамки конкретной терапевтической структуры.

1 Introduction

The request for this lecture/workshop/article has spurred me on to new explorations, and has pushed me into an unexpected flow while reading and browsing. I enjoyed it and discovered something new. I looked for – and found – explanations for the importance of the tongue as a communicative organ in bioenergetic work with negativity. Inspired by years of experience with Ben Shapiro's creative way of activating the voice, and the fun of sticking out the tongue, I continued my research. I would now like to share my enthusiasm for fascinating functional-anatomical contexts with my colleagues and anyone interested in vocal expression of pain and suffering, aversion, the desire to strangle and contempt. I will treat the oral segment, the mouth and throat area and the possibilities for the non-verbal expression of negativity.

Charles Darwin, Wilhelm Reich and Alexander Lowen have studied the anatomical structures that allow us to understand the physical-emotional expres-

sion of aversion, disgust, negativity. Darwin described the mimic, vocal phenomena; Reich and Lowen showed how these emotions are [might be] blocked and the technique by which they can be solved/softened.

Darwin had, at the end of the 19th century, already given many phenomenologically precise descriptions of facial expressions, including expressions of unwillingness and defensiveness, in his book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Reich and Lowen have left us ample treasure chests in which they – looking far ahead for their time – gave clever, detailed descriptions of anatomical and functional connections with regard to the expression of (negative) feelings and the bioenergetic handling of these. Neurobiology, for instance Porges' Polyvagal Theory, much later examined and validated the phenomena of bodily expression of shock and social retreat on the vegetative and muscular level already described and explained by the Reichian bioenergetic pioneers.

On the intuitive, practical level of working with clients and trainees, this topic has occupied me for a long time and has prompted me to make variations to the classical bioenergetic approach with vocal expression. I was most inspired by the figure of "Gollum" (Smèagol) in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and the vocalization for this figure by the British actor, Andy Serkis. With Gollum, Tolkien has created a figure that triggers ambivalence; split into pitiful pain and suffering as well as repulsive villainy. In terms of understanding perpetrator-victim dynamics and testing the vocal expression of unwillingness, this provides a good model for bioenergetic work with physically inhibited destructive aggression.

I have suggested to clients who were internally occupied with disgust and reluctance and blocked in the expression of these emotions to use the image of Tolkien's Gollum to reflect the malice and wickedness as well as the submissive pain and suffering of this figure and to activate the voice in this way. Gollum whistles, spits, caws, whimpers, grins, gnaws, shrieks, sobs, whispers, sniffs, gives off discordant, hissing breaths as if swearing. Gollum's personality is much more dangerous than it looks, soft but terribly strong – a tough nut to crack – speaks of itself in the third person "We are so alone" and refers to itself as "My precious" (Tolkien, 1983). When the clients then expressed their disgust by sticking out their tongues and making the corresponding pharyngeal sounds, whether in the grounding elephant position, in the arch, or stomping on the mattress, an emotional and physical solution quickly emerged. The emotional solution is achieved by embracing and energizing our dark side (the parent devil within us) to take its power into our conscious self. I was interested now, why, for example, did this stretch the neck in masochistic characters? Why was it then easier to look into human eyes, easier to perceive the benevolence in the looks of one's social environment? The projections of one's own negativity into the looks of others were reduced. The eye blockade softened. Why did the breathing deepen at the same time, why did the voice become freer and more varied?

Being aware of the fact that there is destructive aggression and not just eager-friendly effort and a sense of victimization is a prerequisite for working on negative parental introjects in therapy (Clauer, 2003).

If a client can say to me, with a hardly concealable grin, “I like to confuse you and checkmate you,” or, “I’m not doing anything here today and I enjoy making it difficult for you with my complaints”, then the sadistic component of his aggression is close to his consciousness and thus much has already been gained for the therapeutic process. Standing by his own pleasure in the gloating, know-it-all, even wicked, spiteful resistance with the aim of controlling others and avoiding one’s own helplessness. This requires courage and humour on the part of the client and the therapist. For example, with masochistic clients we can often see that all our apparently constructive suggestions run into emptiness and that we experience both impotence and sadistic impulses in the bodily manifested countertransference. We have to welcome this to ourselves and transform it into a suggestion to the client by asking him to take an energetically charged position and trying the following words in our direction: “I am torturing you with my friendly submissiveness, my doubts, my zeal ... I will sabotage all your efforts!” The vocal expression plays an important role. Activating the hidden, aggressive dark sides of the person, often clad in plaintive victimhood, in contact with the therapist, in a vocally and physically expressive manner, reinforcing them, exaggerating and then bioenergetically energizing them, shows releasing effects on multiple levels. It is a way to solve the victim-perpetrator dynamic caused by trauma about the perceived ineffectiveness and powerlessness in contact with other people. The act stops being about either inferiority or superiority, letting the other part of the person only act indirectly by compulsion. It is a way out of the false self, the narcissistic facade, paving the way for more authentic behavior. Through the Sounding, the activation of the tongue and the pharyngeal sounds that express aversion, we find a true self-expression – in this case, embodied relationship statements with destructive impulses – rather than through speaking exclusively, which is controlled by the left hemisphere.

2 Negative Introjects – Shadows

2.1 Inhibition of “Aggredere” – Detached destructive aggression

Among the psychoanalytic authors, it is Verena Kast in particular who, with her understanding of the split-off, destructive aggression, offers a supplement to our bioenergetic perspective, metaphorically extended by the term “shadow” (according to C. G. Jung). Ben Shapiro has taken up the psychodynamic concept of the shadow and started to work on the inner devils in an energetic way with a whole fireworks of bioenergetic techniques. Kast writes about the life-affirming perspective of Aggredere much in the vein of A. Lowen (Kast 1994, p. 149):

“Aggression is the urge to approach people and things in order to get them moving, of course also in the sense of tackling. However, the desire for commitment and the fear of autonomy often make us fear the expression of anger and self-assertion. Aggression of course also means that we can stand in opposition to someone and are hardly going to be loved for it. A reason for many people not to see and live their aggression, but for that, they will one day be overwhelmed by it. The repressed, detached aggression then indirectly manifests itself all the more violently, alien to us in contact with others or ourselves. The inhibition of natural aggression leads to destruction and fear of one’s own inner readiness for violence. The more inhibited the natural aggression is, the easier it becomes destructive, the more we fear our own violence.”

Negative introjects show themselves as unconscious, destructive relationship patterns in contact with oneself and others and are persistent (Kernberg, 1999). They are to be distinguished from identifications that are more accessible to consciousness and feel changeable, although they may have a narcissistic component. Parentifications are also more on the level of narcissistic self-regulation: the support of a parent in the sense of a self-object or assumption of roles, which usually developed on the basis of seduction without physical penetration and violence.

Why and how do we adopt the unconscious demonic attitudes of our parents? The motive of attachment, the emotional, physical closeness that is trustfully sought by the child, the definite dependence on the parents, are reasons why the shadow of our parents can settle in us. As children we do everything for our parents to be loved. We love, imitate and also internalize those who abuse us. We develop our dark sides to protect ourselves from threatening forces in our original family by shifting the protest and our feelings of hatred inward so as not to be rejected and abandoned by loved ones. Unfortunately, the unconscious demonic attitudes of the parent who threatened us are also introjected and internalized.

In my opinion, this process requires a body-psychotherapeutic explanation: negative introjects develop during childhood and adolescence as a result of intrusive, destructive actions, verbal violence, careless and malicious omissions by parents. These are boundary violations of a physical and/or mental nature. Actions and words that usually have helplessness inducing, neglectful, shaming, hostile qualities. Physical violence such as beatings, forced feeding, penetration into bodily orifices for the purpose of cleanliness with hidden sexual motive, sexual abuse, omission of help and support with traumatizing consequences. Verbal violence in the form of devaluations and embarrassment (e.g. laughter, ridicule), sadistic behaviour, expectations that are exaggerated or disproportionate in relation to the age of the child, contradictory or impossible rules of behaviour (cf. Hirigoyen, 2002, p. 52). It can be looks, words, touches, omission of touches. In principle, such border violations have interrupted or prevented the self-regulation of the organism (in relation to sleep, food, sexuality, movement, body care, contact, play).

Within the context of the detachment from the parents in adolescence we turn against depreciation and severity if we have the physical, mental, spiritual strength and sufficient social support. Often there is a countermovement along the lines of “I don’t want to become like my parents”. This does not mean, however, that we can leave a tendency towards self-hatred and self-deprecation solely through a conscious decision. For many of us are frightened by the power of these unconscious parts of ourselves and deny their existence. The negative introjects (as well as the positive ones) are anchored in the body, incorporated, implanted (Clauer & Heinrich, 1999; Heinrich 2003; Ogden et al., 2009), and therefore stubborn in their impact on relationships (Freyd & Birrell, 2013). They are often re-updated and compulsively repeated in thoughts, images, actions in relationships. Then their enormous energy, which finds no solution, destroys the joyful affirmative contact with oneself and other people. The rejection is often projected onto the other person, who is then perceived as threatening. This can also be the therapist!

2.2 Shadows in the Therapeutic Relationship

Most clients, and many therapists, have dark sides that often go unnoticed and unconsciously affect the therapeutic relationship. I deliberately say “most” clients and “many” (hopefully not all) therapists because I assume that we have usually developed a head start in terms of self-awareness of our dark sides through self-analysis and supervision. Analytical Psychology according to C. G. Jung works on understanding and on the emotional holding power verbally:

“To see this aggression, in all its shades, with the fantasies that accompany it, deciding what can be lived out, what can’t, what simply has to be endured as psychological tension, that is working with the shadow. And it is this work on the shadow that makes us conflict capable” (Kast, 1994, p. 149).

Kernberg goes even further by writing:

“The therapist must not only be able to identify himself with the commander of a concentration camp, with the torturer in a dictatorship, with the sexual feelings of an incestuous father or a sadistic mother. He must also be able to feel the pleasure of destroying, throwing a bomb” (Kernberg, 1999, p. 9).

If a therapist is not aware of his dark side, the therapy is in danger. The less he knows his dark sides, the less he can discover them in his clients. Not only do victims need helpers, but helpers are also often in need of victims. Such blind spots can either lead to a collision with the client’s sabotaging unconscious (the iceberg sinks the Titanic) or to a collusion, wherein therapist and client jointly

avoid deep and painful therapy processes (Kast, 1994, p. 150; Shapiro, 2000). Self-deprecating and externally-deprecating introjects are often explosives in the therapeutic process and are suitable for relationship terminations. This is what happened to me with during the first interaction with a client, a collision.

Example 1: Narcissistic insult in the first hour:

I will give you an example of a first contact that caused me to slip on the countertransference. My shadow was activated in the first minutes of the preliminary interview with a woman who reported a lot of insults at work that had occurred two years prior. Listening to her, I immediately noticed that she lacked humour and resilience. I also didn't want to look into her offended, contemptuous face for long. I could not imagine patiently surviving a long therapy period with her in the future. I asked her if she had an "elephant's memory" for offenses and whether she was resentful? I immediately offended her with this comparison, although I like elephants and thought I had worded it carefully. She immediately experienced it as a devaluation to be compared to an elephant. And I already noticed in the first minutes of the encounter that she was too sensitive for me. I guess that's where her parental introject and mine clashed with each other? – (This statement "You are far too sensitive" is part of my childhood experience). My solution was to tell her that I was not sufficiently attuned to her to work with her in the long run. I didn't want to hurt her any further.

On the other hand, we grant clients the unrestricted right to their own shadowy defence. They seek our help because they are usually not aware of their inner conflicts and traumatizations at the beginning of the therapy, and as a result they have developed symptoms. Since negative introjects are anchored in the body, we often grasp them only as a subtle feeling in the complementary countertransference – that of inevitably becoming the punishing, disregarding perpetrator or even the punished victim by our patients.

Kast speaks of passive, resigned victims as an expression of a situation that has stagnated for too long. The aggression that would set the situation in motion is detached. "Even those who make themselves victims act aggressively in a powerless refusal" – "And no aggression is more destructive than the aggression of those who have been victims for too long" (Kast 1994, p. 151ff.). She mentions as examples for blockages of the therapy process: the client's assertion that he no longer understands what is being said; silence; "nothing works" – no suggestion is appropriate; suggestions are demanded, but only to show how absurd they are. Your proposal for paradoxical verbal work with victim identification sounds basically bioenergetically confrontational and is familiar from working with masochistic structures: to confirm the passive-aggressive "victim clients" in their belief that nothing really works! As therapists we could help to find reasons why there can be no solution in this situation. Why nothing works. If you are

lucky, says Kast, the “victim” gets angry and suddenly finds something that works. The helper must draw in the detached aggression, but can easily become a victim, slip into the role of the aggressor or guilty party (ibid., p. 146ff.). However, we do not feel comfortable in our skin and may not know what to do, because we actually mean “well” for our clients. Purely affirmative therapeutic attitudes will only take you so far here. It is not enough for the therapist to encourage the clients to see their good sides whilst not having worked on their aggression and negative introjects. It is also not enough if the therapist is not able to question his own narcissistic attitude; to help, to be exemplary, knowing and strong.

3 Externalization of Destructive Personality Traits

To be possessed by devaluing inner voices, to be overwhelmed, or to have a picture of a hated person constantly before one’s eyes, causes feelings of powerlessness. The technique of externalizing the hated, introjected object offers a way out of this varying compulsion to attack either oneself or others in relationships. However, I like to use this technique differently from how it is used, for example, in ego-state therapy (Shapiro, 2017), because it goes past projection and offers various possibilities of emotional, physical solution. And given as a homework assignment for the next few weeks, it is a step towards autonomy for clients. My guidelines are not narrow. I only ask which element feels physically detached for a funeral, the purification and destruction of something old: fire, water, earth or air? All clients will find a spontaneous answer. Then I ask them to choose and later create an object they would like to bury on their behalf. I give them a few examples of such symbolic objects, pictures, etc. But the task of finding one that applies to them remains with the client. Their creativity is demanded. The ritual itself should give them the opportunity to connect *pleasurably* with their destructiveness. It should be fun!

The creation starts a process of emotional and physical solution. The bound-up emotions of grief, anger, disgust, sadism, the joy of evil are triggered, energetically charged, something that cannot succeed through words alone. At the same time, self-effectiveness is experienced in the process of creation and in the ritual of the funeral.

Example 2: Report from a patient with incest history

“In the meantime, I’ve created an object of aggression. It was a real challenge and the result was a life-size figure with a penis made out of a stuffed pink sock :-)) :-)) :-)). Your suggestion has been fruitful. It also didn’t take much for me to take out my aggressions on this doll. The actually challenging process was giving myself permission to create it and thereby have a concrete counterpart, i. e. to see, feel and act out my aggression in an object-related way.”

And on Saturday evening she/he experienced her/his transformation in a fire ritual with sage, lavender, a shroud, candles and chants in the quarry and when she/he was almost burned, people dropped in, although it was already pitch dark – 10 pm.

“My partner was there, although he was really worried that we could be reported for burning of hazardous waste if someone saw us; as the object was made of pillow stuffing, duct tape, garbage bags and acrylic filler. It was really adventurous and I am glad and relieved to have done it. More about that in the next hour.”

Hands and eyes are energized through active work with the hands. The inner image is transferred to an arm's length away, instead of being intrusive and forceful on a mental level and impairing physical sensations. In traumatized patients, eyes and hands (especially wrists) are mostly frozen energetically, detached from the rest of the body. The eye-hand coordination during the creation process will lead to processing and unloading of the original experience as well as re-integration (a sensorimotor re-appropriation). The exaggeration of individual characteristics by over-shaping and garish painting, the hateful, penetrant, penetrating (eyes, mouth, penis, hands, vagina), exhausting, leaching, making clear the unpleasantly seductive, makes room for aggressive impulses. Particularly one's own aggression expressed therein can be lived lustfully and at the same time vicariously, harmlessly through the object, without acting in a way that is harmful to oneself or others. In the process, feelings of hatred and disgust are brought out of one's own body. The materials, the creation process (kneading, mashing, smearing, painting, shaping) and the type of object should be haptic and visual fun.

Example 3: The negative mother introject during masturbation

Mr. L. late forties, hardly any sexual experience with women, no relationship, no children. He is very active professionally and successful as a freelance psychologist. His mother has been mentally ill (depressed) since his birth. As a young boy he was already responsible for the emotional state of his mother. His father had been absent a lot, and had practically handed over responsibility for his mother to him. When he would get back from kindergarten/school, she often would often sit in front of the TV in her bathrobe, devoid of motivation, and “binged” one show after the other. He himself, when exhausted, also sometimes falls into excessive TV and candy consumption. He often finds younger women beautiful, starting at the age of 40 he does not find women sexually appealing. Those much younger women whom he finds sexually attractive himself usually do not respond to his desire. He reports of “exhausting, destructive” masturbation fantasies, which leave him “empty, without energy, depressed” afterwards.

These are self-damaging rituals that have to do with the feeling of “sucking out” women (mother figures). The bioenergetic therapy lasted over forty hours. On the

comprehension level, I interpret his professional overactivity as defence against the internal part (the maternal introject) which, like his mother, is devoid of energy, regressive, depressive and watches too much television. Mr. L. recognizes himself in this interpretation of his energetic dynamics. – What was the client’s feeling when he came home as a young boy and found his mother like this? To explore the introject, I ask him to give me a concrete account of his inner image: his mother sitting in her bathrobe in front of the television. Her posture, her facial expression, what exactly did the bathrobe look like? Which fabric? How did it feel? My suggestion for further work on this introject takes us in direction of externalizing and shaping the inner image. I gave him the homework of designing a mother figure out of paste-glue and newspaper, and to look for a fabric that looks and feels like the fabric of the red bathrobe. Later, the client tells me that he wanted to drown this figure in a pond near his parents’ house, but unfortunately the pond was frozen over. So, it “occurred” that he was able to dispose of it in his parents’ garbage can in front of the house, which was very satisfying for him. In the course of the bioenergetic therapy, he learned to limit these masturbation images of “sucking out” even further through pelvic body work. He now feels rather refreshed after masturbation.

4 Physical Expression of Reluctance, Disgust, Aversion by Darwin, Tolkien, Reich and Lowen

In his 1872 work, “The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals”, Charles Darwin explores the similarity of expressions both within species and between species. What particularly impressed him about human studies was the fact that forms of physical, emotional expression (especially facial expressions) are similar in people all over the world, regardless of their cultural heritage. I was interested in how Darwin described the universal, non-verbal expression of reluctance, disdain, mockery, loathing, displeasure, disgust, contempt. The following quotes are important for the bioenergetic perspective (Darwin, 2000, p. 287ff.):

“Since the sensation of repugnance originally arises in connection with the act of eating or tasting, it is natural that the forms of expression for the same consist mainly of movements around the mouth. But since disgust also causes anger, it is usually accompanied by a frown and often also by gestures, as if one wanted to push away the disgusting object or to oppose it.”

“Extreme disgust is expressed by movements around the mouth which are identical to those preparing for an act of vomiting. The mouth is opened wide, the upper lip is pulled back strongly, which brings the sides of the nose into strong wrinkles, and the lower lip is stretched forward and turned over as much as possible.”

“Stretching the tongue forward to make an adverse object fall out of the mouth might explain why stretching the tongue generally serves as a sign of contempt or

hatred. Mouth and nose are involved in the expression, the connection to sense of smell and taste plays a role. For example in wrinkling one's nose, showing canines, exhaling sharply out of one's mouth, sticking out the tongue, spitting, guttural sounds like achch..., uchch..., puhh..., phhh..."

A client, for instance, answered my question, "Do you love your wife?" – "Phh..., I can't really tell". "And do you love your children?" – "Phh..., can't tell either. But they love me. I don't know why, either." During this, there was more facial expression of his nasal root and vocal expression than explaining words.

The Maori Haka ritual for getting ready to face the opponent before battle contains many such gestures, sounds, and sticking one's tongue out.

The figure of Gollum in the *Lord of the Rings* inspired me while working with vocal expressions of malice, meanness, indignation, pain and suffering, disgust, contempt, sycophancy, pitiful (Tolkien, 1983). Simply put: everything that one would not like to be, but which is well suited for energizing one's own negativity. As a symbol for the shadow of a split personality, widely known, and equipped with all the ugliness of physiognomy and voice, it offers, in my experience, a creepily refreshing potential for the solution of the first three segments after Reich. Gollum itself, however, stands for the sustained division between soul and body, the blocked energy in the voice: neither does it show the tongue, nor does it really retch anything out.



Figure 1: Tolkien's "Gollum" – Example of a Personality Split (Source: <http://ardapedia.herr-der-ringe-film.de>; drawing on the right: Bente Schlick [CC-BY-SA])

The name Gollum was given to him because he emits a noise that sounds like "Gollum" whenever he is feeling appetite, suffering or indignation. In other words, the name is intended as onomatopoeia, because it strongly reminds us of the gurgling and smacking sounds Gollum makes. British actor and director, Andrew Serkis, gave Gollum/Sméagol his voice in *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*. Serkis states in an interview that he had studied the Gollum's personality in depth and was looking for a voice that could express Gollum's pain. He concentrated on the

sounds coming from his throat. While he was reflecting on it, he happened to be inspired by one of his cats, who retched out a cat pellet before his eyes. This happens through an incredible convulsion and a wave movement of the whole spine from bottom to top. Andy Serkis did not come to develop this voice by studying anatomy and voice therapy books or bioenergetics. He did, however, bring life to Gollum as a character with his psychologically sound observation, empathy and enormous acting and vocal abilities.

Here are two entertaining examples of parodies of Theresa May and Donald Trump:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sGH_v1mDEE from minute 3.40.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64mWOoj68qo>

Wilhelm Reich (1942) described body armor in segments that are functionally involved in emotional expression or its blocking. If we follow Darwin's phenomenology of unwillingness, our clinical experience and neurobiology, the first three segments are critical to its expression (Reich, 2010).

- 1st segment "ocular": musculature of forehead, eyes, cheekbone region
- 2nd segment "oral": lip, chin, throat, upper neck muscles
- 3rd segment "neck/throat" uses the deep neck musculature and the Sternocleidomastoid muscles (neck turner). The emotional function of neck armor can be felt by trying to suppress crying or anger.

According to Alexander Lowen, the jaw, in particular, plays an important role in emotional control. Alexander Lowen sees it as the "Portcullis of the Personality", the key to all other blocking mechanisms in the body. All contractile muscles of the upper body (mouth and jaw muscles, tongue, neck, diaphragm, intercostal muscles, etc.) as well as the pelvic muscles are involved. Like Reich, he emphasized the gag reflex and the vocal expression as important for the solution of the blockages (Lowen, 1979, p. 241ff.).

5 Therapeutic Approaches

Reich and Lowen both worked with character analysis, biographically, in the tradition of Freud. The model for this was the urge theory with focus on inhibition of aggression and sexuality as disease triggering. Analysis and body techniques were primarily based on the therapist's activity (monadic approach), but both had great intuitive, interactional aptitude. The danger of the urge theory-based, classical bioenergetic perspective lies in overlooking the destructive relationship patterns of the patients and their energetic urgency in self-perception and perception of others, and in limiting therapy to dissolving or cathartic methods, without working on these patterns of contact to oneself and in contact with others. Con-

sequences of trauma, such as dissociation, intrusion, shock-induced paralysis, lack of expressiveness and mistrust (projection/introjection) in interpersonal contact can only be dealt with through interventions such as kicking and hitting with a tennis racket (Lewis 2008) to a limited extent. Apart from expressive motoric and vocal techniques (hitting, kicking, screaming), the treatment repertoire also included hands-on techniques for unblocking, in particular for triggering the gag reflex and freeing of the throat and diaphragm. This procedure serves to open voice blocks and to discharge the suppressed feelings with pressure on the Scalenus muscles and the Sternocleidomastoid (Heinrich-Clauer, 2015, p. 41).

“The best way to disrupt the “swallowing” of emotions is to trigger the gag reflex” – “If the reflex is activated or if it is possible to make the patient vomit, the emotions held by the neck armor are exposed” (Reich, 2010, p. 492).

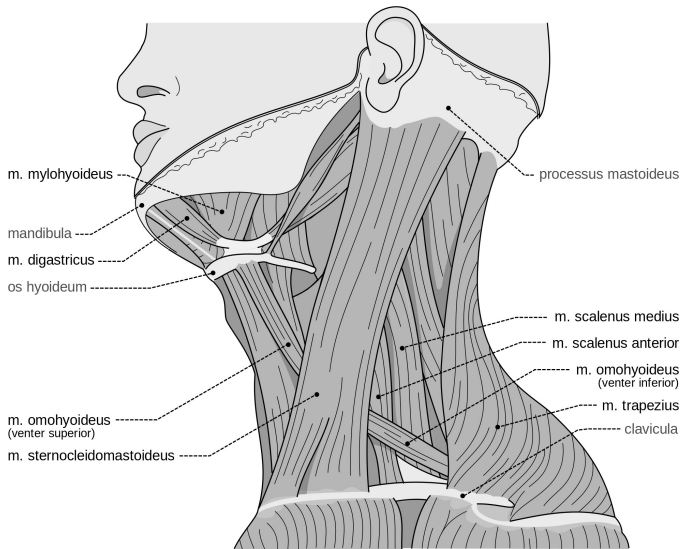


Figure 2: Muscle of the Neck³

The sympathetic nervous system, which is part of the vegetative nervous system and triggers flight and combat reactions, is directly connected to the short neck muscles. It stiffens them in situations involving stress, anger or fear. The direct reaction chain between the mandibular joint, short neck muscles and the floor of

3 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musculi_scaleni#/media/File:Musculi_coli_base.svg. Von Olek Remesz (wiki-pl: Orem, commons: Orem) – Own work, based on this picture from Gray's Anatomy., CC BY-SA 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2339732>

the mouth also plays a central role. If one of these parts is hypertonic, the others also react with hypertension. Tension in the short neck muscles or in the chewing muscles reactively leads to over-tension in the front neck (Spiecker-Henke, 2013, p. 191). In this context it is important to know that the psoas is reflexively connected to the opposite head turner (M. Sternocleidomastoid). A one-sided persistent, visible shortening of the head turner may indicate a functional disbalance caused by the contracted psoas (*ibid.*, p. 179).

So while Reich and Lowen worked on the blockage of vocal expression of anger, crying, aversion with hands-on techniques (or recommended a daily ritual with lukewarm water for the vegetative triggering of nausea), Ben Shapiro suggests numerous exercises for energizing our dark side, which work without hands-on methods of the therapist and are based on a psychodynamic understanding of the different demonic parts of our person. I learned most of what I know about working with negativity, one's own devil/witch on the energetic level, from him. He also shows us that, for example, the acting out of the facial and vocal expression of the "village idiot", tongue outstretched, is a suitable energizing means for narcissistic structures; to clear the head, to work on one's own know-it-all attitude and arrogance or to solve this posture (Shapiro, 1994, 2000, 2006).

Discharging techniques that promote emotional expression are valuable and not fundamentally inappropriate. It is however necessary to expand them by linking them with inner images and – especially for clients with victim experience – with charging-containment exercises, in order to promote self-efficacy so that they do not end up in a passive posture again. Concerning the work with destructive parts of a person, I am interested in such concepts of negative inner images that allow a connection to be established between psychodynamics (introjects as a mental defence mechanism) and patterns of muscular blocking that unfold in the encounter between therapists and clients. Concepts that respect and consider the detached aggression contained in negative introjects in their relationship statement – and that direct diagnosis and intervention not only to the vegetative, muscular, fascial level of the client's body. I focus on vocal expression in order to use the less invasive voice work so that the clients can become self-effective and autonomous in their relationship to me. The clients should be given the freedom to find own interpretations instead of external ones, as well as the possibility to develop an authentic vocal expression. The tongue plays a special role here.

6 Bioenergetically Expressive Work with Negativity: Functional Energetic Aspects – (throat–mouth–tongue)

After having studied the body's resonance and voice for some time (Heinrich-Clauer, 2015), I was interested in how these phenomena and functional connec-

tions of the vocal expression of negativity can be explained anatomically? Why is it worthwhile to give more thought to the bioenergetic work with the tongue? Why does the guttural vocal expression of disgust and reluctance and the tongue lengthen the neck? Why does this open the eye block? Why does hearing improve? The neurophysiological effects of negative and positive primary emotions on vocal expression and auditory perception of human voices and facial expressions can be described with Stephen Porges's Polyvagal Theory. There is a coupling of the ventral vagus complex (VVC) to regulate gaze and attention, facial expression, prosody and the ability to listen (Porges, 2010, 75ff; Heinrich-Clauer, 2015, p. 34ff; Winkler, 2018).

In an external or internal threat situation, the sound of human voices is perceived more vaguely, the voice loses its ability to modulate, facial expression range decreases and changes to negative expressions, the eyelids hang down. The tonus in the entire VVC is reduced to promote combat or escape behaviour and to restrict social behaviour.

In socially safe situations (high tonus of the VVC), humans can show friendly facial expressions, make eye contact, express themselves with an appealing sound of voice and rhythm of speech. The muscles of the middle ear are influenced in such a way that human voices can be clearly distinguished from background noises. In the inner ear, the Stapedius muscle is innervated, thereby improving social hearing of speech (a kind of orientational reaction). The auditory tuba (ear trumpet or Eustachian tube) is opened when the soft palate is stretched.

In many bioenergetic interventions, we have used the tongue's extension in the therapy process intuitively to express disgust and reluctance. This was part of our background experience, but we do not have more detailed explanations of the anatomical connections in terms of efficacy and little explicit repertoire of exercises, except for Ben Shapiro (Heinrich-Clauer, 2015). As early as 1942 Reich pointed out: "The tongue musculature essentially attaches to the bones of the cervical vertebrae" (Reich 2000, p. 492): an important indication that there are functional connections between the tongue and the spine, the skull base musculature, i. e. with the ocular segment and the solving of the eye block. The tongue "is a grandiose acrobat of movement" and "The almost unlimited possibilities of the tongue essentially determine sound formation and resonance" (Spiecker-Henke, 2013, p. 277).

The oral cavity consists of the hard and soft palate, the floor of the mouth with the tongue. The hyoid bone (*os hyoideum*) is a u-shaped bone below the floor of the mouth, which is not connected to the rest of the skeleton, but suspended by muscles and ligaments between the base of the skull and the floor of the mouth on the one hand and the sternum on the other hand. Hyoid bone and larynx are connected by a muscular-fascial membrane to form a functional unit. The base of the tongue is innervated by the vagus (innervation of the tongue by the hyoglossal nerve). If the hyoid bone is lifted by an overstretched floor of the mouth, the larynx also lifts at the same time (*ibid.*, p. 255). Therefore, the spastic

tongue muscles are functionally connected with the pushing down of the Adam's apple and the contracture of the deep and superficial neck muscles. The spastic contracture of the neck segment therefore involves the tongue. This occurs when tears and rage are swallowed! The larynx (sphincter) protects us with reflex cough attacks if foreign bodies penetrate via the respiratory tract. In other words, it is primarily a "lifesaver" and only secondarily responsible for communication (*ibid.*, p. 254). But when emotional expressivity is suppressed, voice versatility is restricted by, among other things, increasing tension in the laryngeal muscles. There is a neural connection here, from the limbic system to the striated laryngeal muscles via the vagus. The inability to react spontaneously and adequately to the environment becomes itself a source of chronic stress (Sonntag, 2003, p. 56).

When Andy Serkis was looking for a voice for the Gollum figure, he focused his attention on the pharynx/throat to identify a space for the expression of (held) pain in the body. The pharyngeal or throaty sounds are well suited for this. All expressions of pleasure and pain are linked to the width or narrowness of the throat. The throat width (parasympathetic innervation) is related to feelings of lust, joy, develops when laughing, enjoying delicious food or pleasant situations. The narrow throat (sympathetic innervation) accompanies emotions such as grief, anger and crying, somatic complaints. Each narrow throat is accompanied by a raised position of the larynx and muscle contractions in the throat and mouth (Spiecker-Henke, 2013, p. 130).

The pharynx is a cavity containing air (anatomically speaking, it consists of three cavities), the diameter of which is highly flexible. Food intake, respiration and communication pass through these cavities. This flexibility is important for vocal expression. The explanation for the blocking or opening of the voice can be found in the system of pharyngeal muscles (ring muscles). The rear throat tract is made up of three ring-shaped muscle bundles, the pharyngeal cords (*Mm. Constrictores pharyngis*), which are important for swallowing. The upper constrictor superior is attached at the back to the skeletal parts of the skull base, at the front to the hyoid bone and the larynx. The constrictors stop under the base of the skull and are replaced by a connective tissue-like membrane (Rohen, 1975, 1977). The middle constrictor obstructs the hyoid bone in its mobility when it is over-stretched. This impairs resonance and sound formation.

When activated, it supports the soft palate in sealing off the nasopharyngeal cavity (Spiecker-Henke, 2013, p. 274f.). The nasopharyngeal cavity can be blocked or opened by raising and lowering the soft palate, which is important in the case of obnoxious smells or feelings of disgust. The close connection between perception or expression of disgust and aversion and the sense of smell and taste is explained functionally by this (*cf.* Darwin and Siegel).

Here we also find the functional explanations, which are important for bioenergetic work; that in expressive vocal, motoric work with defensive emotions a solution takes place where the cervical spine is unblocked, the neck is longer, and the eye blockage is solved.

7 Summary

Darwin showed how the expression of unwillingness is associated with taste and smell organs and how mouth, nose, throat and tongue are involved. Gestures such as sticking out the tongue, spitting, annoyed frowning, wanting to push away or pull back the lips, and guttural sounds are part of it. Reich discovered the emotional function of neck armor (third segment). He spoke of the “swallowing” of emotions, like crying, whimpering, sorrow, anger, aversion – and in his work on the solution of inhibited vocal expression he relied on the triggering of the gag reflex. Like Reich, Lowen emphasized the gag reflex and the vocal expression as significant for the solution of the blockages (Lowen, 1979, p. 241f.). Both concentrated on the neck armor (Scalenus and Sternocleidomastoid musculature) with hands-on techniques, and less on the tongue and throat. These muscle groups per se have no communicative, social component. Shapiro extended the bioenergetic methodology by charging-containing exercises for the voice, working with introjects (devils) as well as the pleasurable sticking out of the tongue. He developed this intuitively, creatively, without explaining the functional references. But in this way he integrated a social-communicative organ, the tongue, into the work with our shadow/introjects.

If Gollum could now stick out its tongue, openly show its contempt and puke, or express its desire, it would no longer be the split character. For it is precisely the bound aggression that leads to pain (victim role) and insidiousness (perpetrator role) showing themselves alternately. The integration of his person does not succeed (it speaks of itself in the third person). He also appears as an asexual being. His voice testifies to the binding of aggression in the throat and tongue blockage. Just as crying openly is blocked. At the end of the film the Gollum emits a resounding scream as he plunges into the magma of the fire cave and dies. During his lifetime he could not free himself in his voice. Here, the opening of the throat would probably be a way of solving destructive introjects, just as it can happen in energetic work with clients.

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