

Transcription of an Introductory Lecture on
Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor
Presented by Albert Pesso
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Long applause following the introduction

It's so heart warming to hear your response. Thank you so much.

My wife and I started professional life as dancers, and we wanted to help our dancers to become the best possible artists and choreographers. I was then an Associate Professor and Director of the Dance Department at Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts. One of my wife's and my goals was to help our dancers get to know their instrument, their body. In that endeavour we asked ourselves these questions: "How does the body move? Is all movement the same? Does human movement have different origins?" We then determined that there were three different motor systems that initiated action. We began to teach our students those concepts and then helped them learn how to move in each one of the three motor systems, separate from the others.

The first motor system was based on body-righting reflexes. Those are the reflexes that keep us upright in a gravity field. We taught them to move just as if they had nothing to base movement on other than the information coming from their spinal column and the vestibular system in the inner ear. Thus, when we asked them to move that way it was as if we asked them to be de-corticated so to speak. In that exercise they could see that their body can keep its own balance without using information coming from the motor system based on volition, and the motor system based on emotions. They could then see that there was a natural "dance" between gravity, the ground and the reflexes. That was one way that movement could happen – based on gravity and the reflexes we depend on to catch our balance.

But then, your body also moves because you could control it. That was voluntary movement. In a way we were discovering the brain for ourselves, the parts of the brain that initiated different kinds of motor behaviour. In this exercise we taught our students to move in a totally voluntary way, absolutely without emotion.

So, once again, they were using only one motor system at a time: first reflexes, then voluntary movement. And, to repeat, voluntary movement was separate from emotions. In this exercise using the voluntary motor system, they would

decide where they would place a part of their body, without any emotion or affect, and simply place that part of their body wherever they wanted to place it.

Then next, we would teach them to move spontaneously, in immediate and uninhibited body response, to whatever emotion they felt or decided to recall at that moment.

In this movement modality, we asked them to respond to the impulses arising from their limbic system without exercising cortical and voluntary controls. In other words, they could feel an emotion and in this exercise we gave them the freedom to move directly to express that emotion, directly and bodily.

So if they felt fear, they would freely exhibit the movements impelled by the feeling of fear. If they felt fury, they would carry out the movements that came directly from the feeling of fury. If they felt love, they would move with the qualities and actions that came directly from their heartfelt emotion of love.

In this way, they learned to be directly and immediately in touch with the center of their feelings and with the motor behaviour that came out of that center. As a result of teaching these concepts and exercises we realized a very interesting thing. We were now, unexpectedly and unintentionally, getting to the very core of our dance students' personalities and not simply developing their artistic sensibilities – which was our original intention. And what interesting things were coming out of their core!!

But before I tell you how the next step occurred that led to our developing a new form of therapy, I want to talk about the other side of the coin of nonverbal communication we looked at.

This first part of nonverbal communication dealt with the question: "How do our inner states make or produce outer actions?" In other words, "How does what is going on inside ourselves, affect the outside shape and action of our body?"

Now we were looking at the other side of the coin of nonverbal communication. Which can be characterized by the question, "How does the outer shape and movement of *others* affect *my own* inner state?" To summarize, we have looked at how inner affects outer behavior and now we will look at how does outer activity of others affect my inner state? That's going to get very interesting.

Sabine (Sabine Cormann, the Co-Director of the Cormann Institute) spoke in her introduction about how specific we like to be in Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor. And here is the beginning of specificity. I'll get to what I mean in a moment. When they touched their emotional feelings, we said, "Move directly in response to them." Okay. To review, we've established that there are three motor systems and the third one is the emotional motor system where you *feel* the emotion, then you *do* it. Clearly, at this juncture, we were beginning to come

across the psychological process of catharsis. And catharsis is simply another way of saying letting out what is inside.

Now here's the important point of specificity. We learned from observing those emotional expressions and from the feedback from our students, that the expression in a vacuum, i.e. without interaction with some outside figure or system, wasn't entirely satisfying. They found that when they felt their emotion and then let it out directly, there was a momentary release, but they didn't get any response from the outside world that validated what came out and answered it.

We began to understand then, that complete emotional expression was an interactive process and not something done in isolation. In this exercise, people let their feelings go out but nothing came back. So we did a very interesting step: We began to invent what they would like to come back to validate what came out. Later on we began to know and call that process "shape/countershape".

It became clear that an emotion had a **shape** and that emotional expression didn't get resolved or fully satisfied until someone else responded to it – **countershape**. So it began to look like this: **shape/countershape = question/answer** and then things felt complete.

So, on that basis, we began to regularly invent the satisfying, answering, countershape. So that at that moment, we didn't know that we were moving away from dance and into psychotherapy. We didn't make a conscious decision. We had no idea we were going to do that. We just wanted to get good dancers and let their feelings out and express and to be elegant or whatever. But then, when the moment came that they were full of emotional energy and its bodily action, and there was no response, something had to be done.

So we invented what we called accommodation. When they would bodily express fury, we assigned/gave them someone else in the group to present them with the appropriate response. So, like children playing cops and robbers, you know. "Bang, bang you're dead" and the other says, "You missed, it went under my arm." That would make them furious. They wanted to have someone hurt or dead when they went bang, bang. So we then gave people the *appearance* of wounded and dead bodies that they emotionally wanted. Wonderful! The emotion is relieved.

But even after that, they began to feel dissatisfied. Because they came to realise that they were angry because of some frustration that they didn't get satisfied even after their anger was satisfied. And that is when we began to get into their personal history. What were they dissatisfied about? Why were they so bloody angry? Then they said, "When I was little my mother never took care of me I could kill her for that." So we let them "symbolically kill" the mother. But then they said "but then I have no mother."

So we invented an ideal mother. We said, this would be as if you were born again and *this* mother would know *how* to be a mother. So, with that addition and change of history they began to get the satisfaction of mothering that they had been apparently waiting all their life to get. So you can imagine what happened.

The road we had been on until then went to creating good dancers and choreographers. This new road went to psychotherapy. And these are the cross roads where we arrived, after years and years of exploration. So, in 1961 we said, "We go down this road." And we started to think directly about changing people's history and lives, i.e. doing psychotherapy. From nowhere, except we knew how people felt like, how do they move and what they wanted. Fortunately, and early-on, the psychiatric community in Boston got very interested in what we were doing. And then, very early, the chief of psychiatric research at the Boston Veterans Administration Hospital got very interested in what we were doing. He first heard of it in a rather indirect way, (his children were participants in a dance class that Diane was teaching for the Arlington Street Church where she taught those new dance concepts). He made personal contact with us and after experiencing the work directly in several of my sessions, he arranged a grant for me and I became, suddenly, a Consultant in Psychiatric Research at that hospital. And for five years I worked with him as team leader. He was a psychoanalyst. And also in the research team was a behaviour therapist, Leo Reyna, who was the professor of Volpe, the behaviour therapist in South Africa. So, in that team I began to learn about psychoanalysis and behaviour therapy. It was wonderful. And then further on, a psychiatric hospital, called McLean Hospital – it is a Harvard teaching hospital, psychoanalytically based – they made a new department and they made it for me and Diane. I remained on the staff there as a Psychomotor Therapist for eight years working with a wide range of psychiatric patients. That was in the sixties and seventies. Then we decided to develop training programs and then our lives changed. And we spent the last thirty years organizing training programs for psychotherapists in other parts of the world. We now have training programs in ten countries. So I am very busy with all this. But, what I want to tell you all about today, I hope, is how the work evolved from that beginning. You're gonna get a very interesting picture now, how over the years as we developed - now this is forty-five years later – looking at the human condition. Looking at it from a feeling state, from a movement state. And this is what I want to share with you today what I now know about the human condition.

So I will start now. And now at this point the kind of thing I want to share with you - maybe because I'm seventy-six years old and know a little bit about living, I hope – but we all look at the question "What the heck is this all about -- this living business?" And I came to a few conclusions and I would like to share those with you. First, that life is possible. And that we were made to be able not only to live, but to be happy. So that's right in the very core of our DNA -- or whatever we inherited from the beginning of time -- the flavour and the passion for living. The

ability to live and the expectation that living will produce happiness. Because we have the endorphins and other pleasure producing substances in our systems, we must be created to expect some kind of happiness or why do we get born with these damned receptor sites for pleasure? Just to get frustrated?

So we have, right from the start, an anticipation of pleasure. And when you don't get pleasure you might think, "Something must be wrong with life, or with me." But we are made to anticipate that life should provide satisfaction. So, it is clear, we are made ready to live.

We are made out of a sperm and an egg. And that stuff is – I was going to say – just dying to live, but it's not dying, it's just coming alive and it wants passionately to live.

And then we're gonna slowly -- inside our dear mother's uterus -- become a self. And what is one of the first drives of living? Survival of the self!. And all the information about how to survive is in that stuff we were born with. Survival of the self!!

And I go back to what I said before. It is our feelings that want to come out, but it's also the world out there which we perceive with our senses that is gonna influence the state of our lives and how and what we feel safe to let out. For we were made to be able to perceive, we are made with senses. To hear, to see, to smell, to taste, to touch, because we are put in a world that we can be happy in and find pleasure in. So therefore we have selective attention to see what is out there that is good for me or bad for me. Right from the beginning.

But, we are not simply perceiving creatures, we are also acting/moving creatures. So the moment we see, we then get -- instantaneously -- motor responses to do something effective with whatever we are seeing that appears to either improve our lives or endanger our lives. And that happens automatically. The moment we see we get a motor response. We are, as all living creatures are, sensori-motor organisms. If you study the brain, you will see that sensory input goes directly to motor systems. So as soon as we see, we are automatically enabled to do something effective about what we see. I call that process "see-do". Without even consciously knowing what we are seeing, but automatic processes in our brains make an instantaneous evaluation and automatically prepare us to **do** the thing necessary to match what we see with movement that will be helpful. Or not **do** what will not be helpful. Shape/counter-shape appears once again. The moment we see – shape -- we get an impulse to **do** something effective about it – countershape. And the **do** has the same selective attention that will allow us to be able to **do** those things that will make life possible and satisfying. It's not a random process, it's engineered (by evolution) for survival.

When you show a child something it likes, it sees it and it reaches for it. It doesn't consciously think about it. And if it's shown something scary it runs away. There

it is -- see-do. But the moment it sees something it likes and it does something with it that is pleasurable, it is happy and laughs. I call that “**the click of closure**”. It completed something and pleasure is a result. So whenever we see something and complete the action of doing what is satisfying, there is a relief and a feeling of satisfaction and pleasure. So right from the very beginning there is seeing, doing and completing something. And that automatically results in pleasure. And that is a fundamental gestalt notion: we are made, -- and I believe, engineered genetically -- to make things whole, to make things complete. And when we make it whole and complete we are rewarded with pleasure and satisfaction.

Thus, we are driven – not only to survive but to make things whole and complete and that’s what makes life more pleasurable. So that’s now clear, there is a fundamental push to make things complete, to make them whole. Now, I’ll give you a little example of that. I will **do** something I want you to **see** and watch what happens to your body. (AI with his fingers draws a circle in the air and stops before the circle is completed) Frustration? Motor impulse in your arms? (Then he finally closes the circle by moving both fingers together) And when it’s completed it’s satisfaction. And I have only made a circle and yet you reacted strongly to that. That shows how fundamental it is. We simply and inevitably need to make things round, we need to make things complete. And when they are not round and not complete there is frustration and we get a motor wish (which you could say show’s up in your mind’s body) – you almost could jump on the stage and push my arms together, right? And when it is complete there is relief. That is a fundamental rule of existence. Because only when it is complete it is over and you could go on to the next thing. Otherwise it waits and it waits and we do not get the click of closure. Now, where I have just brought you to, is the relationship between memory and present consciousness and present behaviour. Because when there have been no completions of things that needed to be done to complete and fulfil our lives, we remember/record those deficit-ridden events. And we see the world in terms of the memory of those unfulfilled developmental needs.

Let us talk further about memory and consciousness for a moment. Let’s examine the very act of seeing. Most everybody says: “I am seeing the reality now.” But that is absolute nonsense because the instant you see, you awaken in your visual cortices what you have seen like that before. You couldn’t possibly make any sense out of what you see now, in the present, unless you remembered seeing something like that before. It needs *memory of then* to know and experience *now*. So this is not a psychoanalytic notion, this is a neurological fact. What we see now, is driven by memory. And therefore, present consciousness can be seen as a tapestry woven with threads of memory.

So the result is that everybody is seeing their history in every single moment. And they have remembrances in their mind’s body on how to react to what they

see. So every movement of the body is based on remembered movement. Otherwise there would be no ability, no learning and no facility.

But some people say: "I want to live in the here and now. There is no history there is just now." "Good," I say sarcastically, "become an Alzheimer patient and you won't have any history at all." And if they were able to remove their history then they would wonder, as Alzheimer patients do, "Who are you, who am I, where am I?" They wouldn't know a thing about those questions. Because we only know who we are by the assistance of our memory. And we only see by our memory. So the act of seeing and the act of doing is always an act of remembering.

And Gerald Edelman -- a Nobel prize winning scientist, wrote a book describing what he calls, "the remembered present." He scientifically confirms that what we call the present is full of memories and is not a simple fact of nowness!

Okay. That's in place. And we have seen that the act of closing finishes something off and that things that are not closed or completed results in frustration. We now can understand that the memory of unfulfillment keeps part of ourselves from going forward and maturing properly. Now that brings us to the question: "What are the basic forces of life?" And that brings us right back to the beginning.

The primary goal of life is survival of the self. We talked about an egg and a sperm. That is just the beginning. My God! Those two little cells are now joined and it's going to become a viable human being! What a journey! If we look up to the arc of where it has to go, it's way up there! But it **has** to get there. And there are certain things that **have** to happen to it in order to get it up there in good shape.

What does it mean to get up there? Once we get up there we are mature adults. And when we are mature adults it brings us to the next basic push of life. Remember, the first push of life is survival of the self. But we don't live forever. We grow old and die. And knowledge of dying and the fact of ending of life is built into our genes. Our genes certainly know that there such a thing as death. Genetic and evolutionary processes already figured that out. So the reason why we are getting up to here (mature adults) with pleasure is so that we can then be able to **make more life**. And that results in the **survival of the species** and (hopefully) the survival of the planet.

So, in all of us are those two basic drives: survival of the self and survival of the species. The survival of the self process has to take place and a lot of things have got to happen in the past in order to be able to live in the present -- with a sense of pleasure in the world. That possibility should be the norm. But how many of you have patients who say "I have pleasure in the world"? They are coming to psychotherapy because they are not having pleasure and they are

unhappy with what they see and what they do and are unhappy with what they feel and what they think. That tells me that they had a history of incompletions of those necessary interactions that would help them to become a happy human being. And those incompletions are still waiting to be done.

And I examined over the years -- what are the basic tasks that we need to complete appropriately in order to go from two cells to a generative adult who is happy? There are five basic tasks: 1) We need our basic developmental needs met at the right age and with the right kinship relationship. That means we have an innate timeline of some kind. And we have an innate sense about what a complete family network should be and who should do what job at what age. So when we are older -- and those tasks hadn't been accomplished when we were young -- it's already too late and we don't have a mother and a father anymore. It's a real problem. Because it has to be done at the right age and with the right kinship relationship.

2.DVD

Let me list what these basic developmental needs are: The first one is to have a place in the world. And I think that was really talked about in the earlier discussion today when we saw the therapeutic work with the client in the foetus state. The child has to have a sense of "I fit in here, I belong in here, I am wanted in here". And then it has to be nurtured, it has to be fed. And then it has to be supported because human children when they come out (of the womb), they are helpless. They have to be carried around. They are fragile, they have to be protected. And listen to the last one: they need limits. They need limits. That's a need! Limits means they know their own boundaries (are not infinite) and they can handle the fundamental power and forces in their life -- which are enormous. They need to have limits. But that is only the first task in order to grow up: basic developmental needs like place, nurture, support, protection and limits.

2) The next basic task I call **the integration and unification of polarities**. So the person learns to own all aspects of himself. As if he was a planet and has to be an explorer who discovers every continent and every ocean and all that is in the atmosphere. And then be able to say, "All this I have discovered is me." Because if we don't take the ownership of all our polarities we will project those unownable parts out. And if it is our fineness we have not integrated we gonna love it *out there* and if it is the not so fine parts we have not integrated, we gonna hate it *out there*. So we need to own all of it. Among the polarities are the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere, output and intake, also animus and anima, i.e. maleness and femaleness. So that task is: How to find and integrate all sides of our personality and make a singularity, a unity of it.

3) Now the next task is the development of consciousness. And consciousness means we are not just *subjective* but also *objective*. And along with that, to develop a sense of meaning. So we are not only alive but we know we are alive

and we have a sense of the meaning of life. And in humans that is enhanced by one of the things that happen in the development of consciousness -- that meaning gets increased by the development of language. Let's look at what the development of language is all about. Because before there is the development of language we have constructed a representation of outer reality inside (our minds). So, in that way, we have an internal visual representation of the world. We can manoeuvre in the world because we have those stored, *visual* representations. But when we have language we are gonna make a *verbal* representation of the world. That is a very interesting shift. Look at what a verbal representation of the world is. The little baby now here in the womb -- in a few months will be born and then soon start to talk. And then it will drive the parents nuts: "What's that, what's that, what's that...". But then everything that they see gets a name. "That's a doggy," the mommy says "Doggy," the child repeats.

Then you get a visual representation linked with an auditory representation. Look what that does. That tells us that there is a whole new aspect regarding the process of seeing and doing. Because when I spoke about seeing before, I'm seeing with my real eye. But somewhere in my brain I have what is called a minds-eye. That is, that when I'm looking with my real eye I'm also seeing with my minds-eye -- my memories of what I have seen before like that. So when the next day the mother says "Where is the doggy?" the child sees her dog in her mind's-eye. The *word* "doggy" evokes a visual representation in her brain of the doggy she had seen before. And then remember, every time we see we *do* something. We not only have a real body we also have a mind's body just as we have a mind's eye. The development of language results in a new neurological organisation that includes mind's body responses to what we have seen in our mind's eye.

It is not just a fantasy that we have a mind's body. Let me show you how the minds-eye works. Think of your mother or your father. You see them, right? As soon as you see them you get a feeling in your body. If you love them you want to hug them, if not, you try to avoid meeting them. What you see in your mind's eye evokes a motor response that's what I want you to know. So every time that child hears "doggy" she is going to see the doggy and in her body awakens the wish to *do* something with the dog. So that she then gets the click of closure and gets satisfaction when she does what she felt she wanted to do with the dog, pat it kiss it, hug, etc.

What I'm really beginning to open the door for here is the tremendous power of stories and myths to awaken action. And I am referring to action in our mind's body that we don't even know we are doing. As soon as we hear a story we are compelled to do something about it even if only in our mind's body, because we have seen it in our mind's eye. But what we have "done" in our mind's body, has powerful effect on our viscera and the disposition of energy in our entire system. So we have gotten past that one. That is a big load: the development of

consciousness and language and the power of language to affect our internal vision (in our mind's eye) that affects our motor responses (in our mind's body).

To review, when we are talking about the basic life tasks. 1) We have basic developmental needs, 2) integration and unification of polarities, 3) development of consciousness, then we have 4) the development of what I call **the pilot**. The pilot is the highest order of consciousness. It is the part of the self that makes decisions, makes plans, implements the plans and is accountable for what it does. It is like the president of the united states of consciousness. So we are *not* multiples. We own the whole system. This is me! I'm running the system. For me it seems so obvious that everybody should have that self ownership, i.e. the Pilot. But in some cultures it's denied to children and in many cultures it's denied to women to take ownership of themselves. Even today, in many parts of the world, it is still a struggle. And everybody has got to have something done as they grow up that allows them to develop their pilot and take full ownership of themselves.

And the last task is 5) **to bear fruit**. To bear fruit. That is in answer to the question: "What I am here for, what is my calling?" That is just the wish to make some contribution beyond the self. That is a spiritual notion and it's also a biological notion. Trees do it all the time. They grow and they bear fruit -- seeds -- that lead to creating the next generation of trees. Otherwise life would stop.

So this brings us all the way back to the beginning. As I said before there are two basic drives in life: survival of the self and then when we are mature enough and have successfully accomplished all the above interactive, maturational tasks, we can successfully attend to survival of the species. At first we need to **take in** and then we are fully prepared to **put out**. And it has to happen in the right order, at the right age and with the right kinship relationship. So now that highlights what I referred to in the beginning: "What's the whole business of life about?" And I'd like to put it in its simplest terms now. First task of life is to **work**, second task of life is to **love** and the third task of life is to **do justice**. And believe it or not, doing justice is connected with the click of closure and making things whole and making things right. That's justice! A sense of fairness. I think even though we see the world full of injustice it's not in our nature to accept it. The rest of the world, seeing the injustice, cries and hurts and feels the injustice of it. So, let me say those three again: to work, to love, to do justice.

Because if we didn't love, there wouldn't be another generation. That says in order to do those three things there are three basic connections that have to be established. And the first connection is the connection to the self. And we were doing that when we taught our dancers. We said: "What do you really feel?" That is the limbic system, the felt self. In order to be human, a viable happy human being, we have to be connected to the self. Know what we really feel and not just our head and not just words. And then connected with the other. With love. Connected with the other.

Now listen to this last one: Connected to God. And I think it's an innate drive to have a sense of transcendence and something beyond ourselves as a singular, organising principle of life. I'm not talking about a Christian God or a Jewish God, Buddha or a Moslem God, put whatever name you want on it. We are all driven to have a sense of something beyond ourselves that's behind the organisation and unification of the cosmos.

So once we make those distinctions it becomes very clear, that we need to be clear about the differences between them. So, in being connected to *myself*, I am not God. I am only myself. The *other* is not God. But sometimes in some person's history of need for the *other* the *other* fails him and then he could say, "I have to be my own *other*. There is no external *other*, for the *other* has failed me in satisfying my basic developmental needs."

But he really needs the other. You remember the rule: the right kinship relationship at the right age. The disillusioned person says: "Screw the *other*, God will take care of me." Then he's put God doing what humans should have done and we need to be clear about which connection is right for which activity. And not to get confused about it. And that is an important process here. That has to do with what I called limits before. I spoke about the basic drives of humanity which is see-do, click of closure and make things whole, to work, to love, to do justice, to mature, to bear fruit. What is driving all those activities? What is the engine? I believe that the fundamental engines in the basement of our being are the **capacity to destroy** and the **capacity to create**. Those are running everything. But they have to be limited. We are now back to limits. Those capacities, those forces have to be limited, i.e integrated and modulated.

And if they are not limited then all hell breaks loose. They break loose if we haven't had enough limits in our childhood. And you may say, "What do you mean the capacity/tendency to destroy and the capacity/tendency to create?" I mean those are the two fundamental drives that run all of life. Because when I'm working I'm tearing something down. To go further, when I'm completing something I'm making it end. We know how to make things end and we know how to make things begin. To make things end is to kill or destroy in a way and to make things begin is, to create – which at its base is sexuality. And those two forces run everything. But they have to be well developed, unified and modulated with the help of interactions with caring parents so that we know how and when to work and not to destroy and how and when to love others without it necessarily becoming literally sexual. And how to make a difference between the kinds of love like tenderness and care for a child and erotic, sexual love for a partner. We have to learn to make all these different distinctions so when we are working we are not "really" killing but tearing things down, completing things, ending things and when we are creating we are not "really" having sex. But those forces, underneath – sex and aggression, creating and destroying -- is what is running everything, but well under control, modulated and so forth.

What gets it out of control? Because it is out of control in the world we live in. So much rape and murder. Yes, it is out of control. One of the things that makes it out of control is insufficient parenting and especially no limits in the parenting. Where this brings us is to the fact that there are three different kinds of memory that are dysfunctional and affect how we will behave in the future. The first class of memory is a memory of deficits. If we had a history of deficits the present is gonna be turbulent with others. Deficit-ridden memories leave us with a load of unfinished maturational and developmental needs and as I said before, those uncompleted needs don't go away, we just keep trying to get them met in the present, but at the wrong age and with the wrong kinship figures. Most likely our husbands, wives, teachers and bosses. And what a mess that makes!

So when people came to a point in their therapy where they remembered the pain and frustration of their childhood history, we invented an ideal mother who would have done things differently than the real mother. That was way back in the beginning when we first started doing this work. The main focus of the work is still to create new symbolic memory to offset the deficits of the original memory. So the answer even then was not to have catharsis to *get everything out* and then hope to feel better but to *take in* a new experience that transforms our perception of the present.

Okay now let me jump from there because now you know what we do here: we make new memory! Because memory runs our perception of the present and our anticipation of the future.

The second class of poor memories is the memory of trauma. Look at the difference between the memory of a deficit – not enough came in – and the memory of trauma where too much came in that we did not want. And when trauma comes in that we do not want, our boundaries get broken. We no longer have control about what is entering or leaving us. Boundaries get broken. The pilot is lost. The person who is traumatised doesn't run himself, some other, outside force does. And trauma paradoxically evokes and produces – probably by the action of the amygdala – tremendous erotic and aggressive energy as an automatic response. So when people are traumatised, the danger first is coming from the outside – the perpetrator. But trauma victims are also terrified of all the energies that the impact of the trauma provokes inside. That is why they dissociate. They leave their body not only because it is a dangerous place to be in as it is under attack, but also because their body is exploding with unbounded fury and unbounded eroticism that arises internally in response to the traumatic event itself.

Now the third class of memory - and I am just coming to it now -- but it is gonna be an important part of what I will be doing here – is **the memory of filling holes in roles**. You don't know anything about that, I've just start talking about that. That is the third class of memory. Remember we are born knowing what a complete set of family network figures should be like. Born with an innate

knowledge of that. And we are born with the capability to play every single one of those roles. And when we see empty holes where someone should have been we're gonna see an incompleteness. And the gestalt drive to complete it is gonna get awakened. And we complete it with a portion of ourselves without us knowing for a moment we have done it. It's automatic, it's **see-do**. And it has a profound effect on that personality and the disposition of energy in the person. Let me give you an example of that.

Let's say there was a little girl who is four years old and she has her birthday and the mother is crying. And she gets compassionate. "What's the matter mummy?" She says. And the mother starts to tell her a story – remember the power of stories that makes images. And the mother says, "When I was a little girl... (so the child immediately makes an image of the mother in her mind's eye, of her mother as a little girl. She **sees** it. She has never seen her mother as a little girl, but she **sees** it in her mind's eye.) Then the mother says: "When I was four years old, my father(child in her mind thinks: "Oh, mummy has a daddy," and she sees a daddy beside her mummy.)but then the mother adds, "...died." The child then perceives and receives the shock of the empty role. In response to that unfilled gestalt, she takes a portion of herself (from her mind's body) and fills that hole with a portion of herself...without ever knowing that she had done such a thing. And at that moment the child becomes -- fills the space of -- the mother's missing father. And she has no idea that she has done it. At that moment it awakens something like a messianic impulse.

We all are messianic, we all are gonna be the healer. Every time we see an emptiness, we need, we are compelled by that gestalt push, to fill it with a portion of our self. And at that moment we become "the only". And when we become "the only" we become omnipotent. We become all powerful and it loosens the bounds of those profound energies in the basement. So in that moment that she becomes her mother's father she expands (somewhere inside), and is no longer just a little child. She becomes more masculine in some of her energies. And she is now **putting out** too soon before she has received, taken in, all her maturational needs. When we fill holes in roles too soon, we become resistant to receiving. There seems to be some fundamental law that if we **put out** too early we can not **take in**. And at the same time it loosens the forces in here (our bodies) and people then begin to be frightened of the energies inside. When those energies are let loose, then there is a **systemic response** to control those energies. It's not a *psychological response*, it's a **systemic response** (the system does it to maintain stability). So let me just repeat: When we fill holes we become all-powerful. We become Godlike in some way and then it loosens these primordial forces to kill and to create that are so important to be held down, (limited, modulated and integrated) and we have to stop it. And there are four or five different systemic defences against those forces breaking loose. The first one is depression. Instead of having a lot of energy the person will have no energy. The second one is dissociation, that means to leave the body. The next one is retroflexion. Because the person feels, "I don't have these dynamic,

deadly forces but I'm being pursued by them." So they see their own destructive energy as if it is coming **at** them. And then they get afraid of all closures. Even though it came about because they made a closure by filling a hole. The fear is that any happiness will be on account of a click of closure that comes because they killed or because they had sex with a forbidden figure. So **any** closure becomes a **forbidden** closure. So they keep themselves from any kind of closure. Any kind of pleasure. Because the forbidden might have come out. So they find it difficult to complete things and difficult to receive, because they are still putting stuff out.

So what do we do with that? We make a new memory! And you might say, "What is this new memory business? You are creating fantasy because in reality it never happened and you can not change what happened." From a physics viewpoint you can not go back in time and you can not go back in space. That is true. But in our brain is only a *representation* of a past event. And that is a neurological *representation* and not the *actual fact* of time and space. So why not make a **new** neurological representation? The older neurological representation negatively affects our life so why not make a new, positive one? And when we put it (the new memory) back as if it happened at the age and with the right figure it should have happened with, people immediately see a different reality. We don't have to literally go back in time and space. We just can change the inner representation of time and space, recorded as events in the brain. Then the perception shifts. That is the link between memory and perception. And that gives hope. Because if you didn't have this kind of hope what else would you have to do in psychotherapy to make it successful? You had to say that "Past is past there is nothing you can do about it. So let's learn how to live in spite of that and get stoic and tolerate all that frustration and learn to cope and let the grief of the lost possibilities go out." That would be the only answer and that is what many therapies consist of.

What we try to do is to make a new memory. I showed you before how we make a new memory with an ideal mother because there is a deficit in the past and then if there is trauma we make a new memory of protection that should have been there. We make protection and limits and now we make new memories for the holes in roles. An example: The translator is the client for a moment and she has told the story of the little girl when she was four years old. Your mother told you the story of your father died. Now she is forty or so and she is in therapy and she may say, "Oh, I hate my mother she was never any good she was always depressed." And then she may say, "But my mother had such a bad life," and then she starts to cry and says, yes and her father died when she was little. Then we know she filled the hole in the role. An interesting link is here. Whenever there is compassion for a figure this is usually an indicator that they are somehow, somewhere taking care of that figure with a portion of themselves. Compassion is a sign of filling a hole. So in this example I would say to the client: "Let's put something to represent your mother as a child." So if there was a big group she would pick a person, if not, she would pick an object. Probably this

cup. And then she says, "My poor mother she never had a father." And I would say, "Let's make this bottle role play your mother's ideal father and not her real father." And he says, (to your mother) "If I was your ideal father I wouldn't have died when you were four years old. I would have stayed alive most of your whole life."

Now the right figure – even though it is in fantasy, for she is seeing it only in her mind's-eye and she never saw the reality of her mother's loss except in her mind's-eye, she has gotten a motor response (from her imagined scene) and she put herself in. But now, (in the therapy session) we are replacing herself with the new figure. And he says, to her mother in this new image "When I was your ideal father I wouldn't have died when you were four I would have been there for most of your whole life." And the client usually goes, "Ahh," as if a burden fell off her shoulders. The relief is an indication that their mind's body is no longer filling that role. And the disposition of energy is more available to themselves. The energy disposition in themselves visibly and experientially shifts.

And then they say, "If my mother had had a father (as she grew up) my whole life would have been totally different." She got a different image about what that past would have been like and therefore what the future will be like. Now with that client till that moment if I said, "Let's give you an ideal mother", she would have said, "Hah, that's ridiculous. That is just nonsense." And that is the omnipotent part in them. Without that change, they would be the only authority and would kill any other authority. But in this moment she (the client) is no longer that authority but he (ideal father) is there. She is relieved and then she says, "My whole life could have been different, my mother could have taken care of me." She is showing receptivity to take in now by saying: "My mother could take care of me."

And then we could say, "How about, we will invent an ideal mother for you? And she says, "What a good idea." Before that it would be impossible. Receptivity opens up when you fill the hole. And then we would give her an ideal mother and an ideal father – make sure it is balanced, because if there is no father she would jump in to become the husband to the mother, that happens all the time.

I didn't tell you about it that part of my little story. I said when the mother talks about the father that died and the child is shocked... let me tell you this story a little bit further. (Going back to the beginning, when the little girl is hearing about her mother's loss and shows sympathy) The mother says, "You are such a good girl. You listen to me, you are nice to me when I cry. Your father is such a lousy rat. When I cry he just walks out of the house and you listen to me." So what happens then? She becomes the husband to her mother! Any place which is an empty space is a place to fill in. It is as if we are all spiders in a way and we all know what a perfect web should look like. We are born with a perfect family network – ahh! But if the wind blows or something breaks the web? Shock!!, A hole has appeared. But as a spider we will fill it up very fast, with stuff that comes right out of ourselves, with pieces of ourselves.

It is the same with people. Anytime people see an empty space they fill it up. They **have** to. But then they get terrified of the energy that breaks loose. That is why we find it so important to make those movies. In our example we could make another movie of the client's mother as a young woman. And we say, "How about we give your mother an ideal husband?" And the ideal husband would say to her mother, "If I have been your ideal husband I would be kind to you and I would give you all the attention you needed when you cried." She, (the client) doesn't have to do that job anymore.

So, (in this way) we fill all the holes in the roles. But that is never the end of the story. The end of the story is to take care of her needs because when she filled the hole she stopped growing. She stopped to be able to receive. So the movie is only a stepping stone towards satisfying basic maturation needs.

Let me tell you a little bit more. How do we do this work technically? Since we know that present consciousness is driven by memory and that present consciousness consists of perception, action, feeling and thought. So what we do to start this form of therapy we micro-track present consciousness. And micro-track two elements of present consciousness: The first element is the client's feeling, their affective state and the other element is their thought. And we track their affective state with a figure that we invent that we call the witness figure. So that the client – let's say she's (AI indicates the translator) the client – and then if she is smiling or crying and I would say, "A witness figure would say, I see how much grief you feel when you remember your mother's story." If the witnessing process is accurate with the correct labelling of the affect and the right words in the context of the affect, it produces a click of closure and a feeling "yes, that's right!" and that leads to satisfaction.

And as time goes on we would track her thoughts. And that develops a bit more of her consciousness, she not only feels, she sees how and what she feels. She not only thinks but can review what she thinks with her pilot and then by a process of association she is going to remember the historic events that are the foundation for this present moment. Because every present is made up by threads of memory. So if we take apart the present moment with feelings and thoughts then they automatically remember the context of history that is the basis for the present state of consciousness. At that moment in their minds-eye they are seeing the mother or the history and in their mind's body they are feeling it. Then we externalise that event by having different members of the group role play what they see and hear in the inner theatre of their mind, here in the therapy room. So the therapy room becomes to be the externalisation of their consciousness. We put the old history here – not just to provide catharsis and express it – but to see what went wrong. And then we make the new history. Because at that moment they are feeling in their body the age when they had the original memory. At that point we bring in the ideal mother and father and whatever they needed and then the new memory get's placed right beside the

old memory. We don't eliminate the old memory we make a supplement to it. And that supplement changes the way they live in the present and makes them have more hope for happiness in the future. I was playing with the words in my mind, I think happiness has to do with "hope-iness". The more hope you have about how things "could have been" the more happy you can be in the present.

So the whole idea of this work is to start in the absolute present, with where the person is: take apart the consciousness of the present and the history within it, externalise the history, make an alternative that fits (what our genes tell us life should have been like), people get that sense of relief and then the future begins to open up because some of the old things (that hadn't been completed) have been closed and new beginnings and new possibilities to receive can happen. And that is what we do.

This lecture was followed by two minutes of applause and a standing ovation