



EXTRACT - THE THREE HOLLOWES - GERDA BOYESEN

The concept of the three hollows helps us to understand and work more efficiently a) with unconscious emotional and repressed energy, and b) towards a cerebral integration and a cleaning out of any particular emotional trauma. With the concept of the three hollows I refer to the three big and main hollows in the organism: the ventral hollow, the chest hollow, and the head hollow. All three of them contain organs, nerves, and blood vessels.

In my view, emotional energy is basically stored in the pelvic bone; where it lies, neutralised and static. When it is activated it starts to move upwards, towards the head, the mouth and the brain. This emotional energy becomes dynamic as soon as it enters what I call the first hollow (ventral).

When these tissues are activated, the general vegetative responses related to the repressed affects are also activated. At this stage the patient only feels a tension, and perhaps some pain, in the ventral hollow; but he usually has no idea of the content that is buried behind this tension. In other words emotions are for the moment aroused in so raw a form they cannot yet be integrated.

When the emotion enters the chest hollow, the patient feels the emotional quality of what is building itself up in him: whether it is fear, rage, depression, etc. At this stage, you immediately notice that the patient's face and breathing change, clearly becoming very emotional.

Freud used to say that anxiety is the form emotions take when repressed in the unconscious. This feeling is often felt in the chest, associated to modifications of breathing or heart behaviour, as in anxiety neuroses. Patients usually find it difficult to deal with such affective manifestations and are victims of their own fears, emotions and strong vegetative reactions.

Medication can help one to master these feelings; but in biodynamic therapy one will mostly try to help the feelings to reach the head hollow, so that they can be actively expressed and integrated through conscious procedures. Thus affects that have been repressed for more than thirty years can at last follow the paths they were always meant to take.

Several difficulties must be taken into account when dealing with the last stage that leads emotions towards their fulfilment. Between the chest and the head emotions must pass through a narrow door: the neck. The whole process that leads emotions towards their fulfilment can get stuck there. I like to compare the body in this dynamic moment to a champagne bottle where the throat is the champagne bottleneck. The therapist must sometimes not only help the cork to come out of the bottle, but also consider various ways this might happen. Integrating an emotional event in one's conscious thinking and expressed behaviour is an important area.