

THE PRIMARY
PERSONALITY
AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP
TO THE
STREAMINGS

GERDA BOYESEN 1969



INSTITUTE OF
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Gerda Boyesen



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Gerda Boyesen was born in Bergen in Norway on 18th May 1922. She died in London on 29th December 2005. She was a Clinical Psychologist who established and developed the body of knowledge known as Biodynamic Psychology and Psychotherapy over 50 years.

Her books and other writings are a vivid account of how she developed her theories and concepts and demonstrate her understanding of the work of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and especially Wilhelm Reich in a profound and unusual way.

The far-reaching effects of her lifelong research and findings are being proven in the fields of brain research, cell biology, neuro-science, gastro-enterology, psycho-immunology and health as well as in the medical fields which increasingly include energy medicine and psychological services.

Abstract

In this paper, Gerda Boyesen explains Freud's stages of psychosexual development in terms of the circulation of life energy or libido circulation throughout the body. She gives examples of how interruption at any one of these natural stages of development can lead to the interruption to full and healthy life energy and libido circulation.

This in turn leads to feelings of unhappiness, diminished spontaneity, the 'mechanical' behaviour' associated with the compromised, secondary personality, and ultimately to an unfeeling, apathetic and indifferent society.

Gerda goes on to explain how biodynamic methods can free trapped life energy and stagnant fluid, allowing the body to re-establish its full life energy and libido circulation - a key stage in facilitating the development of an open, fulfilled, joyful and naturally ethical personality.

Gerda writes in detail of the strong emotional, mental, physical and spiritual feelings experienced by individuals in the biodynamic process of moving towards the re-establishment of their primary personalities and she explains these phenomena in terms of the mobilisation of trapped life energy within the body.

This mobilisation is helped by the removal of static fluid and unhealthy tissue armour within the body and can give rise to feelings of pleasurable 'streamings'. Gerda points out that these 'streamings' are a sign of a person's progression towards health and realisation of their full potential, and in doing so, she touches upon a unifying philosophy that crosses the borders of psychology, physics, biochemistry, yoga, Sufism, Buddhism and Christianity which can be used to explain the human psyche.

The Primary Personality and its Relationship to the 'Streamings'

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In Biodynamic Psychology we have a concept of the 'Primary Personality'.

It is important to understand the reason why we hold this concept in our minds and hearts.

Whilst in one sense the Primary Personality is the ultimate human potential that we are aware of, in another way, every person has, to a greater or lesser extent, aspects of the Primary Personality that are already present in his or her everyday life.

These qualities are not unattainable, they are innate. In our work with people we need to look for, recognise and make contact with these elements. In so doing we help and encourage, not just those aspects, but the whole person.

This gives them the strength, courage and acceptance to look at and work with their more neurotic elements and the darker side of their character which we call the 'Secondary Personality'.

We can help them see what aspects are missing or have been transmuted and the reasons for this. We can help them to grow, to liberate other aspects of the Primary Personality that lies within, and to connect to these so that that person can shed their constraints and fears and move constructively, every step of the way, towards their own potential and its fullment.

That is our intention and that is why we need the concept of the Primary Personality in all its manifestations. We can thus recognise it in others and in ourselves.

By the Primary Personality I mean a person who does not withdraw or encapsulate their Life Energy and its associated 'streamings' - the little rippling, tingling sensations within the body that tell us we are alive, a process that usually happens during childhood.

It is a person who is in touch with his or her 'libido' circulation, with the pleasure that is derived from being in one's environment and from engagement and participation in any situation; and who will not betray this in themselves or deny it for themselves or others. There is a natural joy in life, a euphoria, that is also practical and pragmatic. It is 'grounded'.

The Primary Personality is curious, not afraid of anything new. It is also flexible and can take the unexpected, not defensive, but able to protect himself.

There is a basic security, a stability and an honesty. This person can give or take openly. He or she has a readiness about them and a presence that attracts and gives to others.

On the aura level, the red and blue energies are in proportion. This means that the earthly energies and the more spiritual energies are balanced and work together.

There is pleasure in work and relaxation, a gentle euphoria and mild intoxication in the pleasure of living. He or she can be a person full of the wonder of life and fully in touch with the childlike side whilst having no difficulty in also being an adult.

There is an integration between the two parts of the personality, the animus and the anima, the male and female sides - in one sense the inspiration and the action.

There is no difficulty in saying either 'yes' or 'no'; 'I want' or 'I do not want'.

Without the rigidity of will, of having to have their own way, he or she can be strong and flexible, determined and gentle, forceful and co-operative.

We all have these attributes within us and sometimes they are distorted by our upbringing and our task in this life. What we need most is the capacity to balance, to self-regulate.

With this capacity, we do not get fixated in any one aspect. When its function is fulfilled, it recedes back into the potential and another aspect takes its place.

Our work with people is to recognise aspects that are stuck or have become chronic and to help them release a little so that new potential comes through.

It is also to recognise what is not there, what is missing, to understand how the person compensates for its loss and again to help that missing aspect to emerge from behind the defences that have prevented its utilisation up till now.

We thus need not only to be familiar with other aspects of the Primary Personality but also to have a sense of it as a whole.

If we can communicate this recognition and encouragement, the therapeutic process is eased immeasurably and more of the person's Primary side emerges.

The Primary Personality is one who has not developed the character armour that is held in the muscles and tissue of the body.

Thus every cell is filled with life energy and can flow freely. The tissue itself is soft and sensitive and not filled with neurotic waste material.

This means that any creative stimulus from within can emerge easily to the surface and be 'self-actualised'. The person does not therefore end up frustrated by him or herself and become their own victim.

He or she can also easily receive stimuli from outside and react appropriately, unhindered by tensions or fears held in the body. The Primary Personality operates to the fullness of his or her capacity, actualising what is potential.

There is a natural friendliness because of a love of other people and of being with them. Others extend one's own life and work and knowledge.

There is a capacity to take one's own privacy when it is needed with no fear of being alone. He or she can fulfil themselves with love, peace and energy when alone without being lonely although when this happens this too is felt.

There is faith in life and a love of life. Its fluctuations are experienced fully.

Death is not feared but accepted. It too is part of life.

The Primary Personality has what I call an "independent well-being", as opposed to the Secondary Personality which is more neurotic and has no independent well-being but is dependent on others and things outside for satisfaction and gratification.

The Secondary Personality is not in touch with his or her 'streamings'.

This is because, although the energy is there, it does not flow through the body tissue easily, as it tends to be congested by waste material, and restricted by body tensions - the organic manifestations of neurosis.

The Primary Personality is also an Ethical Personality which means that he or she does not only think of the Self and his or her own needs.

There is altruism without a thwarting and sacrificing of the person's natural needs. This too is part of the natural giving and taking.

There is a natural cleanliness and order that is not imposed, nor is the person stuck in false misconceptions of liberation that mean one has to live in deprivation and deny oneself.

There are also more “spiritual” qualities apparent.

This comes from being in touch with the instinctual self and the unconscious, the primitive side and natural urges.

This contact transcends itself and the person towards the Higher Self and the spiritual side. The two complement each other and create a balance.

The Primary Personality is ‘open’ sexually, not only to the physical side but also to a more transpersonal or transcendent sexuality, a tantric one.

The heart is ‘open’ and not ‘closed’. This person can love. This is a necessary condition but it is not sufficient.

The opening of the third eye brings a psychic dimension of intuition and contact with the Higher Self and thus the Spiritual side of Man and Woman.

He or she comes into touch and is motivated by the ‘qualities of eternity’- beauty, compassion, grace, nobility and passion.

The ‘streamings’ of life energy flowing through the body can pass through and out, outside the body, and with this our awareness is expanded.

We begin to interact with something larger than just ourselves. Our sensations extend beyond our physical body, our perceptions extend beyond the limits of the mind.

On a wider level, there is a sense of being at one with the universe, and not just an isolated individual.

In human terms, this means there is a natural sense and love for humanity and, at times, a rage for those who abuse this in others.

There is empathy for other people's suffering, combined with a determination to fight the evils of the world, without being overwhelmed by it all and within the limits of reality and one's own capacities to realise one's own potential.

The saint, the martyr and the all-conquering hero are only parts of the Primary Personality.

More than anything he or she can reconcile opposing characteristics. There is an integration within the Self of the different stages of the cabalistic Tree of Life - the Child, the High Priestess, the Warrior King, the Chariot, the Emperor or Empress.

These qualities and characteristics are taken in, in many various ways, absorbed and used to help the Primary Personality reveal its true potential in any given situation.

All the attributes from religion, philosophy, the common goals of humanity are part of the potential of the Primary Personality's potential.

We have an awareness of them all, not only through our culture but also in our unconscious. These attributes - patience, justice, righteous anger, love, understanding, the search for knowledge, compassion, playfulness, passion, humour - all are there for our disposal.

We only have to realise them.

There is no limit to the development of the Primary Personality except that first we must throw off our limitations, our armour and our neurotic character patterns.

The first stage is to contact the Life Force within us - the streamings.

From there on there is no end. It goes on and on and becomes thrilling and life responds through synchronicity. Incredible things start happening. There is no time for boredom, wonder and joy take their place.

There begins to grow a belief in something more than just ourselves, and the seeming limitations of the material world do not limit or fence us in any longer. This order manifests itself uniquely for any and every individual. There is more contact with universal wisdom. and with the deep ‘collective unconscious that is common to all.

We get guidance from this wisdom in our path through life.

The Third Eye and its intuition also leads us the more we trust it.

With all this, our understanding of the universe, humanity, ourselves and the process of life and death grows.

It is really there, in all people, all the time.

We are born with the potential for inner happiness, security and a wonder of the world around us.

We can lose part of it as we become limited, over-rational, deprived and self-seeking.

This tends to blind the Third Eye and the mysterious dimension that makes life worth living as the higher consciousness gets replaced by the superego.

Our parents and teachers are our masters in this process, for better or worse.

It is our role as therapists and fellow humans to help the people we come into contact with. In this way they can sift what is good and what is not in their own growth towards realising those aspects of the Primary Personality within themselves.

This gives us our delight in our work. The pleasure of helping people to come back to their Primary Personality, unique to them but common to all, is no less than their own pleasure in re-experiencing it. It is holy work, for Man and Woman are Sacred Beings, as are animals and all of Nature - God’s creation and work.



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