LIVING SYSTEMS: AN ENDOBIOGENY PERIODICAL

CLINICAL ENDOBIOGENY

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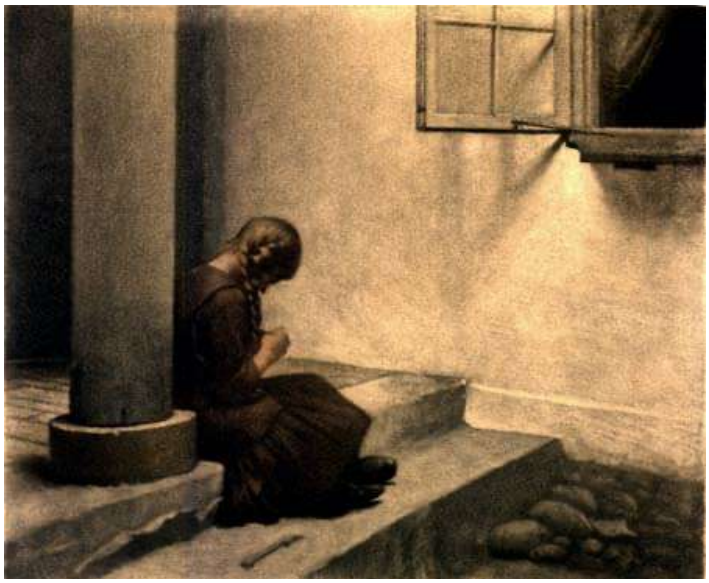
ealing, 1993, by Kamyar M. Hedayat



Peter Vilhelm Ilstead. Lille Pige ved Søjle (Girl sitting at a pillar), 1920
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TRAUMA AND ILLNESS: INSIGHTS FROM DR. GABOR MATÉ AND ENDOBIOGENY

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SUMMARY: Western biomedicine attributes disease to organic dysfunctions but its method struggles to consistently predict disease presence or severity. Dr. Gabor Mate highlights the significant role of chronic stress and emotional repression in contributing to various physical illnesses. His work advocates for a holistic approach to health, integrating emotional and psychological well-being with physical care. Similarly, the theory of Endobiogeny emphasizes the connection between emotional stress and physiological adaptation, promoting a comprehensive, patient-centered approach to medicine. In this article, Vasiliki Delengos reflects on Dr. Gabor Maté's book "When the Body Says No" and compares and contrasts Maté's ideas to the theory of Endobiogeny.

"When we have been prevented from learning how to say no, our bodies may end up saying it for us." – Dr. Gabor Maté

Introduction

Western biomedicine is a reductionist, materialist approach to medicine. Disease is considered to be organic: dysfunctions of genes encoding enzymes regulating cellular biological function. There is strong evidence for this mechanistic approach as a means of disease expression, but not as the origin of disease. It falls short in explaining why genetic polymorphisms alone do not predict the presence of disease. In other words, many people with genetic polymorphisms do not develop disease and many with disease do not have the anticipated polymorphisms. Furthermore, the existence of these polymorphisms do not linearly correlate with

severity of disease. One of factors that must be considered in understanding the interrelated, multifactorial appearance of disease is the inner, emotional life of the patient.

In the world of modern medicine and its endeavour to understanding the complex relationship between emotional well-being and physical health, the contributions of Dr. Gabor Maté, a Hungarian-born Canadian physician, public speaker and author, emerge as a beacon of insight and compassion. His pioneering investigation into how our inner emotional lives influence our susceptibility to chronic illness provides a crucial viewpoint on the limitations of the current biomedical approach to disease. Maté invites readers to reconsider the fundamental aspects of health and healing by delving deeply into the mechanisms of stress and emotional repression as well as their participation in the development of severe diseases.

The premise of Maté's theory, which he thoroughly examines in his book *When the Body Says No*, is that chronic stress, particularly when originating from emotional experiences throughout childhood, significantly contributes to the onset of a diverse range of physical diseases. From cancer to autoimmune diseases, from gastrointestinal disorders to inflammatory conditions, he observes how the body's physiological response to stress becomes dysfunctional when emotions are constantly repressed. According to Maté, it is even possible for parents with good intentions to unintentionally shape their children's perception of love as conditional, which can result in the suppression of negative emotions and the development of the belief that specific sentiments are inappropriate. This, in turn, can cause adults to feel helpless, potentially trapping them in unhealthy or dysfunctional circumstances.

Maté contends that this repression interferes with the body's innate capacity to manage stress, and, over time, can manifest as physical illness. He believes that rather than relying solely on medication or surgery, the key to healing and disease prevention is a sincere evaluation of one's emotional history and coping strategies. By understanding and confronting the emotional origins of our stress responses, people can begin the process of deciphering the intricate web of factors that contribute to physical disease. And while he addresses a wide range of health and wellness-subjects, he highlights the principles of authenticity and compassion as being necessary for healing and maintaining wholeness. These principles are not only fundamental for personal well-being but they also influence how we interact with others and how we confront life's challenges.

For example, Mary, one of Dr. Gabor Mate's patients, had to have her finger amputated after developing gangrene due to Raynaud's syndrome. Mary then was afflicted with scleroderma. After interviewing her about her life, he discovered that she had buried the details of a very difficult childhood while continuing to prioritize her husband and children ahead of her own needs. Eight years after being diagnosed, Mary passed away. Dr. Mate believes that the evolution of her life could have been different if she was capable of vocalizing her needs during her childhood.

Maté goes on to discuss many more of his case studies and further establishes evidence linking the lived experience of patients with disease processes. He analyzes patients with diseases such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis and establishes a correlation between their emotional state, namely the stress caused by self-suppression and the need to please others, to the development of their autoimmune diseases. He presents situations where patients with cancer have a history of emotional suppression and neglect of self-care and investigates the hypothesis that the inability to express emotions, particularly anger, could contribute to the physiological conditions that are conducive for the development of cancer. In his analysis of the lives of patients who suffer from heart disease, he makes the observation that cardiovascular problems can be brought on by stress, overwork, and the disregard of one's physical and emotional requirements in order to satisfy demands from others. When looking at amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) case studies, he proposes that the condition may be connected to a

person's emotional past and to patterns of neglecting their own needs or feelings. An examination of individuals with chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, points towards chronic stress and emotional suppression in the development of these conditions. And when examining cases such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, Maté finds potential links between patients' emotional stress, their incapacity to handle stressful events and the development of these digestive diseases. He dives into his patients' case studies to illustrate his belief on the stress-disease relationship, but he also emphasizes the complexity of these illnesses and accepts the lack of a universally applicable explanation. According to his research, while stress and emotion play a crucial role, they interact with a variety of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors to influence the development of disease.

Mate's work serves as a compelling appeal for both individuals and the medical community to expand their understanding of health by incorporating emotional and psychological well-being. He advocates for a more holistic approach to medicine, one that acknowledges the profound influence that emotional experiences can have on one's physical health. His observations promote a transition toward a patient-centric approach that emphasizes compassion and recognizes the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and spirit.

The theory of Endobiogeny and Dr. Gabor Mate's approach exhibit certain fundamental parallels despite distinct origins and methodologies. Most notably, they both hold an appreciation of the interrelationship between the body's responses to *stressors* and mental/emotional stress. This suggests a pivotal role for emotional well-being in affecting physiologic adaptation. As I (KMH) have noted, perhaps 60-80% of all adaptive activity is driven by mental and emotional distortions and fixations, about past, potential or imagined future events.

Psychiatry is phenomenological by nature. Diagnosis is still made by observing symptoms and using diagnostic criteria with the DSM manual. It lacks objective biomarkers for diagnosis.

Endobiogeny uses phenomenology in the historical intake (anamnesis), semi-objective findings from the physical examination and objective numerical findings based on biomarkers. Endobiogeny is a complex networked approach to human physiology, including evaluation of neurotransmitters affecting the central nervous system. It offers a nuanced integrated vision of how exactly mental and emotional disturbances disrupt physiologic function, and, conversely how physiologic dysfunction destabilizes central nervous system function resulting in emotional instability (Image 1, figure 3.13 from c.f. *The Theory of Endobiogeny,* volume 1, chapter 3: Autonomic Nervous System). This can now be modeled using the Anxiety Panel level 2 in the GEMMA functional biomarker system.

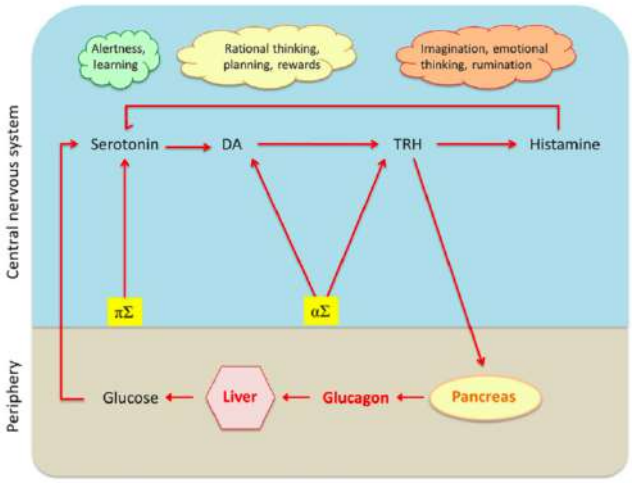


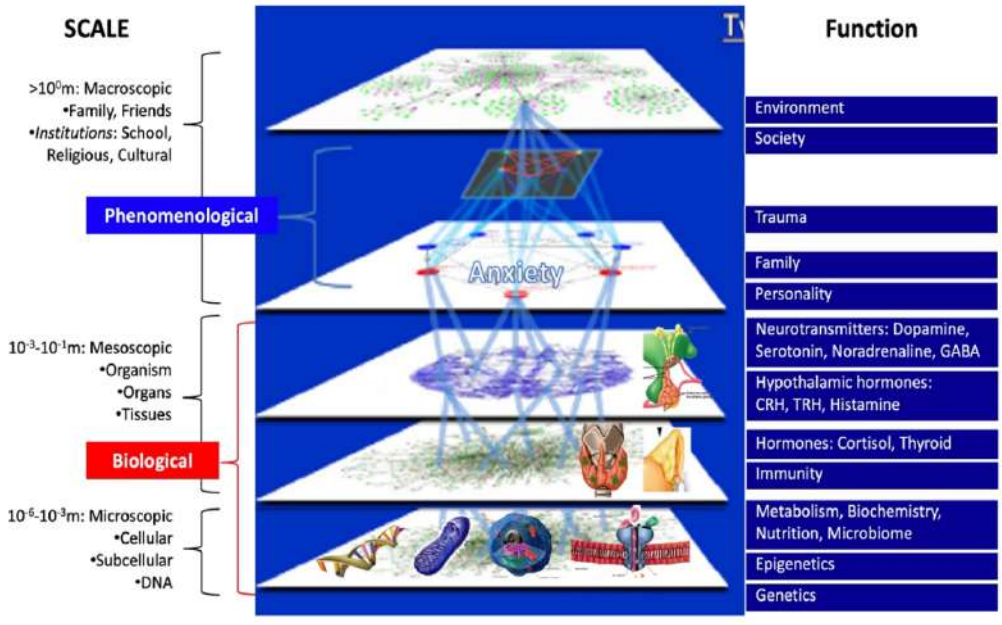
FIG. 3.13 Autonomic nervous system and its central analogues in thought and adaptation. See text for discussion. *(© 2015 Systems Biology Research Group.)*

Both psychiatry and Endobiogeny recognize the potentially significant effects of psychosocial factors on physical health. For example, the physio-psychological profile of patients with Crohn's disease is discussed in *The Theory of Endobiogeny,* volume 3. In addition to the tendency to be sporty and have vivid dreams and a rich inner imaginative life, one can observe specific changes in GEMMA Anxiety Panel level 2 and Spasmophilia level 2, witnessing a particular psychological pattern (Image 2). During a flare up, these patients feel unworthy of receiving help from others (Closed off from receiving index), emotionally vulnerable

(Permeability adjusted), ruminating over past traumatic events (Traumatic memory index), great frustration with their health issues (Acceptance-Contentment) and deeply frustrated and feeling incapability of resolving their health issues (Frustration index).
Both approaches support a holistic understanding of health, acknowledging the complex interactions that exist between the mind, body and environment. For example, in a forthcoming chapter Systems Medicine leading to P4 medicine in *Systems Biology and In-Depth Applications for Unlocking Diseases,* I (KMH) have constructed a multi-scaled, multi-factorial physio-psychological model of anxiety (image 3, below).

TABLE 11.7 Psychological indexes related to Crohn's disease

Index	Critical terrain	Suppressed critical	Remission
Closed off from receiving	↑↑	↑	Normal
Permeability adjusted	↑↑↑	↑↑	Normal to ↑
Traumatic memory	↑↑	↑	Normal
Acceptance-contentment	↓↓	↓	Slightly ↓, normal, or ↑,
Frustration index	↑↑↑, may be negative	↑↑, may be negative	Slightly ↑ to normal, negative value may persist



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Both approaches recognize that psychological and emotional factors have the potential to significantly influence physical health. Maté and endobiogenists also agree on the role of stress in disease development and investigate the ways in which mental, emotional, or physical stress can upset the body's natural balance and lead to disease. Both approaches entail having a conversation with the patient and analyzing their history. The endobiogenist, responsible for both mental and physical health is encouraged to use a spacious, non-directed approach to anamnesis. For example, instead of stating, "What's bothering you?" we would ask, "What would you like to accomplish during our time together?" And, one may ask, "Are there any traumatic events that you would be willing to share from your childhood or adult life?" (c.f. *The Theory of Endobiogeny,* volume 1, chapter 13: Art of the History.)

According to the theory of Endobiogeny, during each stage of childhood development, a particular line of endocrine function is predominant (image 4, table 13.12 from *The Theory of Endobiogeny,* volume 1, The Art of the History).

Traumatic or adverse childhood events can suppress or over-entrainment these hormones resulting in disorders related to the dysfunction of those hormones. For example, between 2-5 years

of age, the thyrotropic axis predominates, in particular its hypothalamic hormone TRH. This same hormone acts as a neuromodulator, intensifying vivid imagination. It also plays a role in inflammation, pain sensitivity, endocrine pancreatic function (e.g. insulin, glucagon) and cell proliferation. Thus, a traumatic event like parental divorce or abandonment at 3 years of age and over-stimulate TRH resulting decades later in an aggressive metastatic cancer.

Both emphasize personalized treatment programs. Endobiogeny employs in-depth evaluations of the patient's physiological and psychological condition to personalize treatment, whereas Maté's approach focuses on how personal history and emotional patterns contribute to disease.

TABLE 13.12 Endocrine recycling phase 4: childhood

Age	Phase	Program	Sub-program
1	Early childhood: toddlerhood	Somatotropic phase: modeling of exterior by growth hormone	Thyroid, metabolic
2			
3			
4			Thyroid, endocrinotissular
5	Mid-childhood: school age		
6			
7			
8	Late childhood: preadolescence		Corticoid, metabolic
9			
10			Adrenal androgen, tissular
11			

Endobiogeny and Maté's theory share the same spirit of holism and exploration of the connection between psychology and physiology. Both Endobiogeny and Mate acknowledge that emotional stress can reduce one's physiologic capacity, and when reduced sufficient, disease is manifested. However, they differ in methods and application. Endobiogeny primarily focuses on physiologic disturbances, addressing the body's regulatory systems. It is founded on a systemic theory of life that incorporates pharmacology, pathology, physiology, and the environment, thus is multi-dimensional beyond the individual or their immediate family. Endobiogeny's incorporation of trauma and adverse childhood events (ACE) is in service of understanding how intensely to regulate physiology—but it is also more than that. It is in service of a notion of health that includes a sense of psychological integrity. Maté's work is grounded in psychoneuroimmunology (PNEI) and the psychological factors involved in the development of disease. PNEI has a good body of experimental scientific evidence but lacks a truly integrated and interrelated vision of what is cause, mechanism and effect. Endobiogeny makes this distinction to a very fine degree.

Endobiogeny has the advantage of GEMMA, its biomarker modeling system (aka the Biology of Functions). This system allows for a modeling of physiologic activity and its impact on psychological function. It can identify where and in what ways an individual's buffering capacity has been compromised. For example, the Anxiety panel level 2, models physiologic factors that make one more inclined to experience anxiety. But it also models neurotransmitter imbalance and estimates the tendency for anxiety to be situational or generalized, worse in private vs. public settings, etc. Endobiogeny employs a comprehensive array of interventions to help restore one's buffering capacity, including the recommendation of tailored psychological therapies, lifestyle recommendations, nutritional considerations, pharmaceuticals, as well as herbal treatments. Maté's approach is phenomenological, emphasizing awareness, emotional expression and the psychological aspects of healing. His method of healing prioritizes emotional healing. We have found that the greatest success is experienced when both approaches are used concomitantly. Thus, the comparison is not to distinguish better or worse but to demonstrate complementarity as well as areas of unique strength.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both approaches mutually support the notion that a comprehensive perspective on health is necessary, acknowledging that addressing physical well-being without considering emotional and psychological well-being is insufficient. And despite their divergent theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches, they share an understanding of the interconnected nature of mental and physical health. The Theory of Endobiogeny informs us that health is dynamic and multifaceted, necessitating a personalized, and preventative approach to healthcare that acknowledges the many factors that affect a person's health. Dr. Maté's research provides a powerful reminder of the human capacity for resilience and healing. By recognizing the critical role of emotional health in physical well-being, we can start to create environments that facilitate healing, inspire emotional expression, and eventually result in a more comprehensive view of health that transcends the boundaries of conventional medicine. ❊

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About the Authors

Kamyar M. Hedayat is co-founder of Systems Biology Research Group, a private research company dedicated to promoting research, education, publication, product formulation and development of commercial clinical tools based on the theory of Endobiogeny. He was trained by the co-developer of the endobiogenic teachings, Dr. Jean Claude Lapraz, and is a leading international proponent of integrative physiology and Endobiogeny. He is the author of the definitive four-volume series *The Theory of Endobiogeny.*

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