



## The Embryo in Us - Human as Embryo

Understanding ourselves as Embryo and

How that Relates to Our Consciousness and Psychosomatic Being

with Jaap van der Wal MD PhD, June 2,3 & 5,6 2021

A new ONLINE Course that is LIVE brought to by Jaap van der Wal and Kate White CPPP

*This course explores human prenatal development and how the shaping of the body (morphogenesis) expresses essential attributes of the development of the human being as a being of spirit and matter, of body and mind. The scientific method of phenomenology is used to open up a truly holistic understanding of the human being. By following the processes forming the human embryo, the course will shed light onto such themes as healthy development, the purpose and wisdom of the human form, and, indeed, the very meaning of human existence. The embryo as a psychosomatic unity of Spirit and Matter, Mind and Body. Or (A.T. Still): Man is Mind, Motion and Matter*

In the human embryonic development we deal with what could be mentioned as 'still functioning in forms'. By this is meant that the gestures of growth and development that the human embryo is performing could be interpreted and understood as human behaviour. And as a kind a pre-exercising of what later will appear as physiological and psychological functions. *"The body developed out of us, not we from it" (Rumi)*

The human body gets its shape and form during the embryonic development in a continuous process of change and metamorphosis. By means of the phenomenological approach it is possible to understand those gestures as human behaviour. During the early phases of human existence the processes that accompany the (at least conceivable) act of incarnation may be "read" from the biological facts. Those gestures also are a kind of echo or recapitulation of the gestures of development of man as a species. In this way biography and biology meet. The embryonic existence is not a merely phase of human life that we have passed, no, the embryo still exists in us: also in our unconscious physical existence and body we act as beings of soul and body.

The human embryo seems to be a kind of continuous empathetic equilibrium between 'introvert antipathy' and 'extravert sympathy' in relation to its context and environment. This polarity seems to be active in various dimensions and directions a.o. between head and extremities and between cranial (head) versus caudal (pelvis), while in the trunk and the vertebral column (the so-called Middle) the typically human quality of going upright and balancing seems to be preserved. During its total development the embryo is the expression of the presence of a being, which is able to mediate between "Heavens" (celestial forces) and "Earth" (terrestrial forces) and that like every living being exists in breathing between Chaos (Motion, Process, Time) and Cosmos (Form, Structure, Space).

Prior knowledge of embryology is not required. Diagrams, illustrations and a reader will be available. The lectures and discussions will be alternated with practical exercises like form drawing and bodily motions ('eurhythmy').



## Global Program in Themes and Keywords

### THE UNDIVIDED EMBRYO

*The Body that we are - The Speech of the Embryo –  
The Embryo in Us – Shaping the body*

Participator or onlooker? Two realities in one. Understanding or explaining? Goethean and phenomenological approach. Holistic science, a way to overcome and to enlarge Cartesian natural science? Polarity and/or duality? Spirit and matter as One. What are we actually doing as embryo? Mind and body in the womb? Gestures of growth as human behavior and expression. Where do we come from? The embryo as centripetal existence: from yond to here. How the soul shapes a body. The prenatal gesture of individuation and DE-velopment. Prenatally we have 'two bodies'. Being born as gesture of dying and emancipation.

### THE POLARITY EMBRYO

*Life as the In-between – In the beginning Cosmos & Chaos –  
First week, the Angels Landing*

The Breath of Life between Chaos and Cosmos, Yin and Yang with in the Middle health and dialogue: Meden Agan. Death has two faces; Life is the Middle. Trinity of the animal body with trunk as the 'functional elevation'. 'Dynamic morphology' of fertilization and conception. Phenomenology of the egg cell principle and the sperm cell principle with a Steigerung between two polarities with 'turning inside out' as signature of 'The Middle'. The process of de-biologicalisation as intermediate between spirit and matter. How does spirit come 'into matter'? The biology of incarnation? Getting or making children? Reproduction or 'passing on life'? The zygote as the undivided human body. The first week: organism and wholeness versus cellularity with differentiation and organization as the essentials of embryo life. Mineral body, time is not there yet. Nidation, the primordial dialogue of pregnancy.

### THE THREEFOLD EMBRYO

*From Vegetable to Animal Life – Incarnation, creating the Inner  
The animate Body be(com)ing aware*

The processes of the first embryonic week, when only the dimension of space is present. From the 'physical way of being alive' to the 'plant man' (germinating and growing out) in the second week. The first axis in the body after Center and Periphery: the ventro-dorsal direction. In the second week the lifetime dimension appears: Man is not 'there' yet, the embryo as non-individualized being. The incarnation process of the heart: man is 'coming to here'. After the cranio-caudal and left-right polarity the dynamics of embodiment: the animal body. Fascia and blood as dimensions of mediation and innerness. Individuation & twins. The rhythmic segmentation of the middle and metameria of the body. Parietal vs visceral organization. Form, Rhythm and Cycle. From mere 'outside' being to a being with 'innerness' (body cavity, organs).

### THE UNIVERSAL EMBRYO

*Triune Man: it is all about the Third – The human: Coming to one Self –  
Mankind, the Embryo of Freedom*

From growing out to growing in: 'animal man'. Dynamics of incarnation and embodiment: de-lamination and individualization. Two bodies: Mirroring the macrocosm in the microcosm of the bodily organization. The extremities as a new principle. De-folding and "opening" of the body position. Polarities between arms and legs, head and extremities with the trunk in between as the image of freedom. Arms mediate. With the polarity of head and periphery, threefold being now appears in all dimensions. The fourth phase with unfolding the human erect posture. The conservation of the upright body as essential for the human quality of maintaining freedom and equilibrium. The Human as the 'adult embryo' and 'first-born' creature. Retardation and non-specialization as clue. Human as mediator. Embryology of freedom.



### About the author

Jaap van der Wal Ph.D. is a medical doctor and till his retirement in 2012 he worked as associate professor in Anatomy and Embryology at the University of Maastricht, Holland. After his medical education in 1973 he became specialized in the functional anatomy of the locomotor apparatus with (later on) emphasis on the architecture of connective tissue and fascia and its role in proprioception. Gradually he developed as teacher in Philosophy of Science and in Medical Anthropology. "My passion however was and still is human embryology. The human body is a process, developing and functioning in time. The embryo moves and behaves in forms. It is in this area that I encountered the Goethean phenomenological approach. I apply the method of dynamic morphology to understand what we actually are doing as human beings when we are embryo. With respect I can find in the embryo cautious answers to questions as to the meaning of human existence." After his retirement he fully devotes his energy to Embryo in Motion, a worldwide project on teaching Embryosophy. Also look at his website: [www.embryo.nl](http://www.embryo.nl). He now teaches his 'Embryosophy' in Europe and USA in institutes for Craniosacral-therapy, Osteopathy, Polarity Therapy but also Prenatal Psychology and Trauma therapy and so on.



Also look at his website: [www.embryo.nl](http://www.embryo.nl)

### Some literature on Embryology (a.o.)

Bie, G. van der, Embryology – Early development from a phenomenological point of view, Louis Bolk Instituut, Driebergen, Holland, Publ. Number GVO 01, [www.louisbolk.nl](http://www.louisbolk.nl).

Blechsmidt, E., The Ontogenetic Basis of Human Anatomy – A Biodynamic Approach to Development from Conception to Birth. Ed. Brian Freeman, N. Atlantic Books, Berkeley, 2004.

Blechsmidt E., Gasser R.F., Biokineticstics and Biodynamics of Human Differentiation, North Atlantic Books, Berkely USA, 2012 (1978), ISBN 978-1-58394-452-3

Grossinger, Richard, (2003): Embryos, Galaxies and Sentient Beings – How the Universe Makes Life. North Atlantic Books, Berkely USA, 2003, ISBN 1-55643-419-7

### On Morphology

Foundations of Anthroposophical Medicine – A training manual, Guus van der Bie & Machteld Huber (eds), Floris Books, 2003, ISBN 0-86315-417-4.

Companions for the study of medicine, Anatomy and Physiology and more! Produced by Louis Bolk Instituut, Holland. Look [www.louisbolk.nl](http://www.louisbolk.nl), choose Companions 2001. **Free download**

Functional Morphology – The dynamic wholeness of the human organism, Johannes W. Rohen, Adonis Press, 2008, ISBN-10 0932776361.

### Books by the author

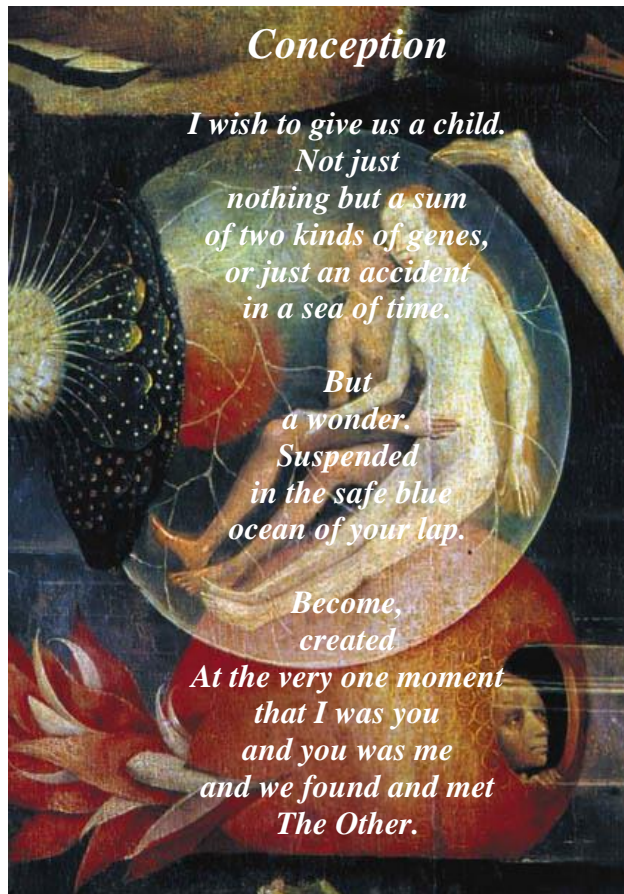
Jaap van der Wal, Michaela Glöckler (Hg.) ***Dynamische Morphologie und Entwicklung der menschlichen Gestalt***, Verlag am Goetheanum,, 4th revised edition, 2016, ISBN 978-3-7235-1552-5. German, extensive English abstracts.

Jaap van der Wal, Dynamic Morphology and Embryology. Chapter 4 in Guus van der Bie and Machteld Huber (eds), ***Foundations of Anthroposophical Medicine***, Floris Books, 2003, ISBN 0-86315-417-4.

### Documents available

It is possible to download the PowerPoint presentation(s) that are used during the course. This also concerns articles and chapters that Jaap has published (plus some articles about the fascia) and includes animations shown during the seminar plus poems and tales that are quoted. There is available a complete package of articles and audiovisual material either via the the CPPP-website or via Dropbox.

## Poetical Thoughts



### *Embryo*

*An embryo is a human being.  
A phase, a chapter  
in the unique biography  
of a human creature.*

*We are expecting a child:  
Who is it going to be?  
Not:  
What is it going to be?*

*Who only recognize the  
recapitulation of a species:  
for those the mystery  
is not meant.  
They already read  
what has to be  
written yet.*