A NEW PARADIGM FOR MASSAGE BASED ON SUBTLE ENERGY AND QUANTUM SCIENCE

Albert Schatz and Mary Brewster

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AN INVITATION TO VISIT A NEW WORLD

We invite you to join this guided tour of a new world of massage, and learn about the reality, philosophy, and subtle energies in this new world. You don't have to leave your home, family, and friends, or pay for travel and accommodations. You don't have to learn a new language. You only have to learn about a new paradigm. If you tell your clients and massage therapists about this new world, some of them may join you there. Everybody is welcome and people may stay as long they want.

WHAT IS A PARADIGM?

A paradigm is a belief system which stabilizes and perpetuates an establishment by defining what that establishment considers accurate information, proper thinking, appropriate research, and other useful activities, all of which are acceptable because they do not "rock the boat."1

In massage, the term manipulations refers to how a massage therapist uses her hands to move different parts of the client's body. If massage is defined as manipulations, the paradigm of massage is focused on manipulations, and is associated with an establishment that is stabilized and perpetuated by an appropriate superstructure. The superstructure for the present massage establishment consists of massage schools, organizations, school accreditation, national certification, state regulation, and local ordinances. If massage is defined differently, the paradigm and its superstructure are different.

New paradigms are created by those who, like Henry David Thoreau, march to the beat of their own drummers. The new paradigm of massage could not have developed within the constraints of the old paradigm because it challenges some of the basic tenets of the establishment that is associated with the old paradigm. The new paradigm therefore had to develop independently of the old paradigm.

"All great new advances must come through the door marked heresy. Not that all ideas that enter that way are good. Far from it. But, although not all heretical ideas are good, all good ideas are heretical - at first. And since we cannot at first sort out the good ideas from the bad, we must, as a matter of principle, give some sort of support (limited though it may be) to all heresy. Only so can we nourish the wellsprings of progress.... Heresy, like freedom - indeed it is one aspect of freedom - can be maintained only by constant vigilance."2 If you limit the search for truth and forbid men anywhere, in any way, to seek knowledge, you...
"Philosophical writing on touch is rare."3 There is less philosophical writing on massage. Schatz and Brewster were the first to focus on "A Search for an Appropriate Philosophy of Massage."34,35,36 They believe that co-creative science, which involves dowsing,37,38 is an important component in the philosophy of massage. They now consider Wright's concept of co-creative science (to which they referred in 199635) to be unscientific.39 In 1995, Schatz and Carlson reported that Swedish Massage increased the human energy field. They also examined the role of subtle energy in massage, and raised philosophical questions about the nature of massage.4 Schatz and Brewster In 1996, Schatz and Brewster published a philosophical overview of how subtle energy is involved in massage, healing, and health.5 This present article, which describes a new paradigm of massage based on subtle energy, concerns the philosophy of massage. We hope our article will motivate discussion on the philosophy of massage.

The philosophy of massage should be grounded in an appropriate paradigm. To be appropriate, the paradigm should be grounded in contemporary science, and associated with an establishment that welcomes new insights about important issues, and suggests research in new areas of massage.

One important issue, about which there is little definitive information, is why massage is beneficial. We shall consider this issue from the point of view of the old paradigm, which does not explain why massage is beneficial; and the new paradigm which does.

**WHY IS MASSAGE BENEFICIAL?**

Massage induces relaxation, reduces stress, and produces many other beneficial results. These beneficial effects are associated with manipulations because manipulations are associated with massage. It is assumed that the manipulations have to be the right kind and have to be done the right way for maximum benefit. But there is no well-documented information about the extent to which manipulations are responsible for the beneficial effects of massage, regardless of what the manipulations are and how they are done. Without manipulations, there is no massage. But this, in and of itself, does not mean that manipulations are responsible for all or much of the benefits of massage. Without subtle energy, there is also no massage. The benefits of massage, as we shall see, are more directly associated with subtle energy than with specific manipulations.

There is no well-documented evidence that massage therapists who have met the standards of state regulation, the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation, and national certification are more qualified to induce relaxation, reduce stress, and provide other benefits than massage therapists who have not met those standards.

There is no well-documented evidence that the manipulations and the sequence of these manipulations, which are taught in accredited massage schools, are more beneficial than others.

Gordon Inkeles and Murray Todris, in their book The Art of Sensual Massage, published in 1972, tell us, "There are no special tricks to massage..., You don't need an intensive course in anatomy to lay your hands on another human being.... Massage, like music, is what Aldus Huxley called a psycho-physical skill.'..." Did Bach know how his muscles worked? No. But he played the organ very well and was a magnificent teacher. If proficiency in any psycho-physical skill depended on correct knowledge of physiology, there would have been no good singers, dancers, pianists, runners, and so forth until the middle of the twentieth century."33

George Downing, in his Massage Book, published in 1972, tells us "Making up your own strokes is not hard. The more massage you do, the easier it will become. Your hands, you will find, have tremendous imagination. The secret lies in leaning ways to trigger this imagination."6

Downing also tells us: "Your body is an energy field.... A knowledge of anatomy is in no way necessary for the learning of most basic techniques.... In sum, massage is an act of celebration, an act in which the experience of the giver is as important as the experience of the receiver., Approach it as such, and you will learn from within yourself everything else about it which you might ever want to know."6

Roberta DeLong Miller's book Psychic Massage, published in 1975, provides this advice: "When you feel connected with the person, you know intuitively which part of his body to touch first, which second, which last. Follow your feelings about what you want to do - they're usually right.... Don't worry about the precise way to perform the strokes. Where I feel it's important, I've included suggestions, but feel free to experiment on your own."7

In 1994, Hayes reported a pilot study with people whose neck, shoulders, back, and hands were massaged for 20 to 25 minutes at the time of day when they were energy low. Some
of the manipulations were taken from Joseph and Sandra Duggan's book *Edgar Cayce, Massage, Hydrotherapy, and Healing Oils*. The people reported that they felt more relaxed and were more energetic.

In 1995, Lauriann Greene pointed out, "There is no standard for what constitutes a 'good' massage... Each client will have his own opinion on the subject, depending on his own tastes and physical condition... Massage is an art. There is no one right way of doing it." It is a "misconception" to assume "that there is one definition of what constitutes a 'good' massage and a 'bad' massage... Students and new graduates often think the way they were taught to massage in school is the 'right' way to do massage, and that massaging any other way is 'wrong'... What you learn in school is a good basis from which to develop your own style."9

In 2000, Cherie Sohnen-Moe wrote, "Massage as an art can be, and is, practiced by anyone without training.10

**THE OLD PARADIGM**

*We all of us live too much in a circle.* B. Disraeli

Peter Ling (1766 - 1839), in Sweden, is credited with putting massage on a scientific basis. Johan Georg Mezger (1838 - 1909), in Amsterdam, named the manipulations effleurage, petrissage, and topoment. Since then, there have been changes in some areas of massage. But the paradigm has remained basically unchanged.

**Two centuries after Peter Ling**

In 1993, the American Massage Therapy Association® (AMTA) defined massage as follows; "Massage is manual soft tissue manipulations, and includes holding, causing movement, and/or applying pressure to the body."11

In 1998, AMTA defined the scope of practice of its members as follows: "Massage or massage therapy is any (italics ours) skilled manipulation of soft tissue, connective tissue, and/or body energy fields with the intention of maintaining or improving health by affecting change in relaxation, circulation, nerve responses, or patterns of energy flow."12 In this definition, massage is "any skilled manipulation." "Body energy fields" may be manipulated and "patterns of energy flow" may be changed, *But this definition still equates massage and massage therapy with manipulations. Therefore, the primary focus of the definition is on manipulations, not on energy. Inadequacies of the old paradigm*

On close scrutiny, the 1998 definition has serious inadequacies because its manipulations are undefined. As a result of this ambiguity, the definition of massage and massage therapy has been applied to some other bodywork modalities, and state regulation of massage therapists now unjustifiably applies to other bodyworkers. The definition also applies to Therapeutic Touch in which the practitioner does not touch her client's body at all.

The 1998 definition reveals how little the concept of massage has changed since Ling and Mezger. The major change appears to be an attempt to include other kinds of bodywork, which are very different from massage.

Finally, there is no general agreement about how much and what kind of training is required to produce the skill that is required to do manipulations satisfactorily. Nor is there any information about how that skill can be objectively measured to determine which massage therapists are sufficiently skillful and which ones are not? *In view of these inadequacies, how useful is the 1998 definition?*

If massage is defined as a manipulation or a sequence of manipulations, then massage is by definition nothing more than a manipulation or a sequence of manipulations. In the old paradigm, massage is a closed system in which one individual does well-defined manipulations that move certain parts of another person's body in predetermined ways. The kinetic energy of the former drives the system.

A massage begins and stops at certain predetermined times. And touching is equated, in "a reductionist framework,"3 with physical manipulations, despite the fact that touching involves subtle energy changes and we may "touch" one another in ways other than physical. An example of this is the comment, "What you said touched me deeply."

The old paradigm provides no well-documented information about the extent to which manipulations are directly responsible for "patterns of [energy] flow." A massage may be unsatisfactory from the client's point of view, because the vibes ("patterns of [energy] flow") are not right for that client. In the new paradigm, as we shall see, the "body energy fields" and their "patterns of [energy] flow" are important components of the massage itself.

The old paradigm considers the human body as an essentially material entity. However, this concept applies to only an infinitesimally small part of the human body. "If all the nuclei of all the atoms that make up the whole of mankind were packed together, their global aggregate would be about the size of a large grain of rice."13 Massage manipulations are therefore concerned with only a minute part of the human body. In the new paradigm, as we shall see, the human body consists of energy patterns that may extend throughout the universe.
In the old paradigm, massage is a closed system. A massage therapist and her client are two separate entities each of which occupies its own space throughout the massage, whether they are touching one another or not. The beneficial effects of the massage are considered the result of the massage, and not an integral part of the massage per se, which consists only of manipulations. The massage, from beginning to end, occurs entirely within another closed system, the confines of a treatment room. The old paradigm has isolated massage from the mainstream of science, including subtle energy whose importance is now well recognized. In 1995, Schatz and Carlson referred to that isolation as follows, "A discipline, such as massage, is 'healthy' when it is ... in balance with science" and unhealthy when it "continues to be based on" outdated scientific concepts.

As a result of that isolation, the paradigm based on manipulations has become the old paradigm because a new paradigm based on subtle energy and quantum science has emerged. The two paradigms provide very different understandings of what massage is, how it is done, and whether massage therapists need to be regulated.

**THE NEW PARADIGM**

The best of science doesn't consist of mathematical models and experiments, as textbooks make it seem. Those come later. It springs fresh from a more primitive mode of thought, wherein the hunter's mind weaves ideas from old facts and fresh metaphors and the scrambled crazy images of things recently seen. To move forward is to concoct new patterns of thought, which in turn might dictate the design of the models and experiments.

E. O. Wilson, Harvard Biologist

The new paradigm defines massage as an intentional "energy practice" that may involve manipulations of any kind in any sequence. The old paradigm defines massage as manipulations that may affect energy patterns.

The new paradigm is a right-brain approach that emphasizes intuition and creativity. It educates people while they are learning to do massage. The old paradigm is a linear, scientific left-brain approach which emphasizes factual information, acceptance, and conformity. It trains people to be massage therapists. Barnes discussed the influence of right and left brain orientation in his article on "intuitive therapy."15

The new paradigm explains why massage is beneficial because it considers explanations that the old paradigm disregarded. "You cannot exclude the explanation you have not considered." is the title of a lecture Professor Geoffrey Rose delivered at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in October, 1990.16

In accordance with that advice, we considered possible explanations of the benefits of massage in terms of the intent and intuition of massage therapists, and the placebo effect, all from the point of view of subtle energy. A massage, a practitioner's intuition and intent, and placebo effects all involve subtle energy. The respect, trust, and other aspects of the personal relationship between a massage therapist and her client, which all involve subtle energy, are conducive to placebo effects. The extent to which the benefits of massage are placebo effects has not been researched. The very idea of a placebo effect is incompatible with the old paradigm.

**What is subtle energy?**

An up-to-date adequate understanding of massage requires knowledge of subtle energy, an appreciation of the human body as a subtle energy system, and recognition of the important role of subtle energy in massage. Our minds, intuition, thoughts, intentions, emotions, and other feelings are forms of subtle energy. William Collinge's book Subtle Energy, Awakening to the Unseen Forces in Our Lives, provides a fascinating and illuminating overview of the field of subtle energies in their many diverse aspects. This book has no reference to massage.

In 1972, Downing said, "Your body is an energy field." In 1975, Roberta DeLong Miller believed that energy played an important role in massage. In 1993, Carlson, Barbera, and Schatz discussed the importance of subjective/qualitative aspects of massage, all of which involve subtle energy. There is increasing interest in a so-called medical model for massage, but massage therapists have largely ignored the present world of subtle energy with which medicine is becoming increasingly involved.

It is not surprising that subtle energy is involved in western massage. It would be surprising if it were not. The role of subtle energy in eastern bodywork modalities is well-recognized. Subtle energy is involved in all bodywork. Miller has a whole chapter entitled "Energy" in her book Psychic Massage. We hope this present article will motivate massage therapists to seriously consider the new paradigm and the important role of subtle energy in their work.

**Manipulations versus subtle energy**

Subtle energy raises an important question: To what extent is it responsible for the benefits of massage? It is well known that relaxation, stress reduction, and other beneficial effects, associated with massage, are also provided by other modalities which do not involve the
manipulations of soft tissue that are associated with massage. However, massage and all these other modalities do involve subtle energy in the form of caring, respect, trust, intent and intuition. Therefore, the common denominator (for massage and the other modalities) is subtle energy, not manipulations. Some of the other modalities are:

1. **Compassionate massage**, which involves light touching, and subtle energy. This massage includes no manipulations that move tissue. Mary Ann Finch tells us, "I am awed that the most wondrous of all the massage strokes is that of simply 'resting' - resting my hands, resting my intentions, resting my heart as one would rest in contemplative prayer. Compassionate massage ... is ... embodied contemplation. Silently, I am here, sheltering you through my hands with my own vulnerable and wounded loveliness. This is touch raised to the art of anointing, the art of prayer and the sacrament of caring."18

2. **Prayer** need not be of the silent or the verbal type. It may be an action, such as the laying on of hands, the process that passes energy on to another individual, which brings about some degree of healing."19 This and some kinds of spiritual (contact) healing do not involve manipulations that move soft tissue. Distant spiritual healing, in which a healer may be thousands of miles away from the individual to whom he sends healing energy, certainly does not involve manipulations that move soft tissue.

3. We consider Therapeutic Touch a massage of the subtle energy fields of an individual's "energy body."14 The movements of the practitioner's hands are inches away from the person's material body. So, here to, there is no movement of soft tissue.

4. Herbert Benson's relaxation response20 and other kinds of meditation, which are forms of subtle energy, also induce relaxation, reduce stress and produce other beneficial effects without manipulations that move soft tissue.

5. Spiritual healing, or psi healing, which also involves subtle energy, "is defined as a systematic, purposeful intervention by one or more persons aiming to help another living being (person, animal, plant, or other living system) by means of focused intention, hand contact, or 'passes' to improve their condition."21

6. Gentle, caring touch, without any massage-like manipulations of soft tissue, is relaxing, reduces stress, and has at times been life-saving.22

**The human body is a subtle energy system**

*Do you remember how electrical currents and "unseen waves" were laughed at? The knowledge of man is still in its infancy.*

Albert Einstein

There is little writing on the philosophy of the human body. Stuart F. Spicker's introduction to the book, *The Philosophy of the Body,* begins as follows: "This book is an attempt to resolve a teacher's frustration. During the past few years, I have been disappointed with the paucity of published material about the philosophical conception of the human body available to students of philosophy, psychology, and medicine.

"To be sure, there is a plethora of literature published under the rubric of 'philosophy of mind' and 'philosophical psychology'; but thus far only a small fraction of the finest philosophical literature deals mainly with the philosophy of the body." (Spicker was Associate Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Community Medicine and Health Care at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine.)23

Since then, considerable research has revealed that the human body is a subtle energy system,14 and the new paradigm of massage as an "energy practice" has emerged. This contributes to the philosophy of the body from the point of view of subtle energy. Each person has his own unique individual physical body which is separate from all other physical bodies. Our physical bodies retain their identity even when we are physically touching one another. The new paradigm provides a considerably more complex concept of the human body and of massage than the old paradigm does, with its focus on the massage therapist's manipulations and the client's anatomy, physiology, and pathology.

In the new paradigm, the human body consists of patterns of subtle energies which extend throughout the universe. We are all therefore connected to one another, regardless of where we are geographically located. The "subtle bodies"14 of each massage therapist and each client consist of:

1. "the ethereal body" which is "believed to serve as a template from which the physical body is formed."
2. "the emotional body" which is "the field of emotions and feelings."
3. "the mental body ... where thoughts, mental processes, and visual imagery reside."
4. "the astral body' associated with the heart and emotions."
5. "the 'etheric complex' which contains the information to perfectly form the ethereal body."
6 and 7. "the 'celestial body' and the 'ketheric body,' both of which are associated with spiritual atonement.

These seven subtle energy bodies, which make up the aura and go by different names, can all be detected by dowsing. "Dowsing can ... help us see the aura, that energy field that
In contrast to manipulations which we see, massage (in the new paradigm) is the sum total of subtle energy interactions which we cannot see. The physicist David Bohm has commented on this invisible world as follows: “What common-sense naive realism takes to be empty space ... is, in fact, teeming waves of energy. In that ocean of energy ... everything is connected. All human beings, together with every particle in the universe, are the outcome of the history of the universe and store that history at some level of themselves.”

In the new paradigm, massage is a dynamic (changing) interaction of fields of subtle energies. These are the subtle energy bodies of the massage therapist and her client, and the subtle energy “body” (i.e., soma) and effects of the massage itself. Each subtle energy body is made up of all its energy fields. All these energy fields are continually interacting and changing. This is a very different view of massage than simply equating massage with manipulations.

A massage therapist and her client are a subtle energy system
In the new paradigm, the subtle energy connection between a massage therapist and her client is formalized when the two of them first communicate, usually by phone. The connection is formalized because it has acquired its own unique subtle energy pattern or form.

During the massage, the client is not a passive recipient of manipulations, but is as actively involved in the massage as the practitioner, in terms of subtle energy interactions which are the quintessential components of massage. The massage therapist and her client are literally touching one another, through their energy fields, even when they are not momentarily in physical contact during the massage. For these and other reasons, a massage is a much more complex interaction than a sequence of manipulations.

Massage occurs in an ocean of subtle energies
In the new paradigm, the massage therapist, her client, and the massage itself are immersed in an ocean of subtle energies. The subtle energy bodies of the massage therapist and her client both occupy the same space (which is the universe) and are interconnected, interrelated, and interacting, before, during, and after the massage. Massage is therefore an open system of subtle energy fields because these fields extend throughout the universe, and exist in dynamic states, before, during, and after the manipulations. In this paradigm, “mind, consciousness, and thought” (which includes intuition) are all forms of the subtle energy interplay that constitutes the massage continuum.

ORIGIN OF THE NEW PARADIGM
The idea of a new paradigm for massage occurred to Schatz because of his knowledge about The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, and his personal experience in doing Therapeutic Touch, dowsing, and spiritual healing, all three of which involve subtle energy. The new paradigm was developed by Schatz and Brewster within the framework of spiritual massage healing, which is a form of worship and a religious ceremony. The primary focus of spiritual massage healing is on prayer, not manipulations. Prayer (which includes the laying on of hands), worship, and religious ceremonies all involve subtle energy.

A unique massage course
Schatz and Carlson explored the role of subtle energy in massage, and also considered quantum physics, in the mid 1980s in a unique course entitled “Scientific Swedish Massage and Holistic Health,” offered in the International Academy of Massage Science. Carlson was Director of the Academy and the Instructor. Schatz (with a Ph.D. in Soil Microbiology and Biochemistry) was the Associate Instructor and Director of Research.

The course provided hands-on training and conventional information. But it was specifically designed to educate students broadly rather than train them as massage therapists, which massage courses traditionally do. With respect to education, an important objective of the course was to motivate students to question the status quo and think for themselves. The course was also unique in other ways. It was the first massage course which had a Director of Research, who was a research scientist with an international reputation, and who had been a Professor of Education. The course therefore:
1. discussed what education is; i.e., the philosophy of education, and how education differs from training;
2. introduced students to epistemology which is the study of knowledge from such points of view as what do we know, how do we know whether what we know is valid, and what are the limits of our knowledge;
3. motivated students to think independently about important controversial issues, such as state regulation and national certification;
4. introduced students to philosophical considerations of massage. Within the
epistemological framework, the students realized that a definition of massage in terms of manipulations was inadequate. They therefore considered the following philosophical questions:

(a) "Does massage involve more than the well-known manipulations? If so, what does 'more' consist of? If we don't know what 'more' is, how do we know that massage includes more than manipulations?"

(b) "When we massage a client, what are we doing? Are we massaging her, body, or both? If we assume that a client and her body are one and the same with respect to massage, how do we know that's true? If we think there is a difference, what is that difference, and how important is it in terms of massage. If we don't know what that difference is, how do we know there is a difference?"

(c) "What is subtle energy, why is it important in health, and is it involved in massage? If it is, how is it involved, and what is its significance in massage? How do our answers to these questions influence the massage we give, and how our clients respond to the massage and to us?"

The course also applied the above-mentioned considerations by:

1. including Therapeutic Touch and integrating Therapeutic Touch with Swedish Massage.
2. including spiritual healing and integrating spiritual healing with Swedish Massage.
3. introducing students to the concepts of subtle energy and quantum physics, and their importance in massage.
4. including dowsing the human energy field to determine the effect of massage on that energy field before and after massage.
5. discussing and applying the scientific method by including students in real, important research to determine the effect of Swedish Massage on the human energy field.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe subtle energy will be a major area in future research on massage, and all students in massage schools will be taught to measure their clients' energy fields before and after a massage. This is what students in Carlson's course did in mid 1980s. We also believe spiritual massage healing will receive increasing attention.

In the new paradigm, massage is "an energy practice." This paradigm respects the dignity and uniqueness of the individual massage therapist and her eclectic massage, if that is what it is. In his section on intuition, Collinge tells us, "It is one thing to use an energy practice as taught by someone else, and quite another to invent your own practice that works for you." The importance of intuition in massage is recognized by the new paradigm.

Intuition has received relatively little meaningful attention in the old paradigm. Depending on which paradigm we "see," we draw very different conclusions about what massage is, and the alleged need for the regulatory standards that presently obtain. In the old paradigm, massage schools (which devote much time to manipulations) prepare students to satisfy the requirements of regulating agencies. These requirements are allegedly needed to assure competence, in doing manipulations, in order to provide quality service and protect the public from harm.

However, there is no well-documented evidence that the requirements achieve their stated objectives. There is no well-documented evidence that enough serious harm has occurred to justify the alleged need to protect the public from that harm. In addition, the regulators have not objectively measured hands-on competence, quality of work, and client satisfaction. Without such measurements, how can they identify allegedly competent and allegedly incompetent massage therapists?

EPILOGUE

"There were two age-old tendencies towards stagnation in scientific thought which those of youthful spirit had always to resist. One was the human weakness of accepting the uncorroborated say-so of eminent authorities, and the other was the human stupidity of regarding natural science as something divisible into water-tight compartments. Of course, it was contended that such compartments, labelled Chemistry, Mycology, Bacteriology, Etcetera were never really fish-tanks for myopic specialists to swim about in, but merely convenient departments in one splendid and sunlit edifice of science separated at the most by glass walls, decorated with the flags of all nations, and provided with innumerable intercommunicating doors. If so many stacks of old scientific papers got piled up on each side of the glass partitions that in the end no one could see through them, that was certainly regrettable; and if some of the doors were locked for periods ranging from a decade to a century, well, that also was a pity -- but who wanted to work in a draught?"

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Quantum physics sees the universe as existing overall as energy, and this energy exists in two forms, either in particle (having form), or as wave (unformed or empty of form). Particles can be seen and observed at points in time and space, and are the basis for the objects that we perceive in the universe, or the conventional reality we are used to living and moving through. This conventional reality does exist but not in the way we are led to perceive it. Science has now shown how we have a subtle energy bio-electric subsystem running through and around the gross physical body. This is what creates self sustaining patterns of behaviour based on a belief that all encounters with similar object give feedback consistent with all previous experiences of that same object.