

Maria Rosaria Filoni (Ed.)
Bioenergetic Analysis 2026 (36)

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The Clinical Journal of the
International Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis

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(2026) Volume 36**

With contributions by Scott Baum, Léia M. Cardenuto,
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Content

Editorial Note	7
The Uniqueness of Bioenergetic Analysis Atlanta, USA, October 8–12, 2025 <i>Maria Rosaria Filoni, Garry Cockburn, Scott Baum & Yael Harel</i>	11
Winnicott’s translation of Reich Orgastic potency and the depressive position <i>John Conger</i>	67
The Structure of Structure A Functional-Structural Analysis of Character Patterns <i>Sergey Kamratov</i>	87
Adolescence and the clinical work of bioenergetics today <i>Camila Macedo</i>	109
Impulsive/Compulsive Personalities How We Hear and Understand Them in Our Narcissistic Society <i>Léia M. Cardenuto</i>	127
Book reviews	151
Editorial Board	155
Information and Instructions to Authors	157

Editorial Note

Bioenergetic Analysis • The Clinical Journal of the IIBA, 2026 (36), 7–9

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Dear Readers,

With this issue, I conclude my tenure as Chief Editor of our Journal and extend my best wishes to Thomas Fellmann, who will replace me.

This issue of our Journal seeks to convey, as much as possible, the content of the Atlanta Conference held in October 2025, where our colleagues Garry Cockburn, Yael Harel, and Scott Baum conversed with Nancy McWilliams, Paul Watchel, and Sue Grand, respectively. You will find summaries of their presentations, which will ensure that even those unable to attend Atlanta can participate in this event.

The title and objective of the Conference was to highlight the originality and uniqueness of our method, and the sessions were organized to maximize the presence of colleagues from around the world, encouraging participation in the discussions in every way possible.

We are also publishing the list of workshops' abstracts, which, with their interesting and varied content, allow us to share the intellectual and experiential vitality of our colleagues.

We are also very pleased with the other articles we offer you. The first is by John Conger and was sent to us by Garry Cockburn, who received it from the author in 2010 and recently discovered it among his papers. Conger had presented this work to the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society as part of his admission to that Society, to which he was admitted and which is unpublished. Garry consulted Helen Resneck-Sannes and Sylvia Conant to ask Conger if he would be interested in having the article published in the IIBA Journal, and he happily granted his permission.

The topic of the article is very interesting because it discusses how Winnicott used some of Reich's important concepts in his work, without citing

the source. We are very pleased to present it to you both for its content and to honour a dear colleague of ours who has contributed so much to the life of the IIBA.

The other articles are by a Russian colleague and two Brazilian colleagues. Here too, in addition to the interest in the topics covered, we are pleased to be able to present the work of colleagues from countries less commonly represented in our Journal.

The first article: *The Structure of Structure: A Functional-Structural Analysis of Character Patterns*, by Sergey Kamratov, presents a “functional-structural analysis of character patterns, integrating insights from psychoanalysis, body-oriented psychotherapy, and the Russian psychophysiological school. The author conceptualizes character as a multi-level dynamic system that combines cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and somatic components. Special emphasis is placed on the theories of Wilhelm Reich and Alexander Lowen, who link character to bodily manifestations and energy blocks, as well as the ideas of Russian scholars, who offer a systemic perspective on behavioural regulation”.

Camila Macedo addresses the topic of *adolescence and bioenergetic clinical work* with these patients. “This paper presents exercises adapted from Lowen and contemporary body therapies to demonstrate the importance of somatic work with adolescents. Clinical experience demonstrates that bioenergetics provides an essential therapeutic framework for developing integrative pathways that combine sensations, images, and emotions. This approach intensifies interpersonal affective registration, validates individuation, respects expressive boundaries, accommodates emotional fluctuation, and enhances the self-acceptance necessary for identity formation.”

Léia Cardenuto addresses the topic of *Impulsive/Compulsive Personalities: How We Hear and Understand Them in Our Narcissistic Society*. On this topic, a few months ago the author presented a webinar, which can be followed on the IIBA website. “Given the difficulty of the topic of addictions and dependencies, based on a history of extensive research, this article will address the treatment of individuals with compulsive behaviours and addictions. Its objective is to show how Bioenergetics can be a valuable tool in cases where sensoriality is impaired. Grounded in the psychodynamic understanding of the processes involved in these behaviours, and through the understanding of the role of the ‘characterological muscular armour’, the understandings of Reich and Lowen can help these patients reconstruct their ego structures of containment and restore the

‘tonic envelope of emotions’ to make their defence mechanisms better and more flexible.”

Motherhood is sometimes difficult or impossible, and sometimes presents challenging scenarios for both new mothers and fathers. As therapists, we are called to accompany the most diverse journeys and help mothers and fathers best address situations ranging from the difficulty or impossibility of having a child, to the difficulties and discomforts that new mothers may experience. We therefore review two books: Vincentia Schroeter’s latest work, *Babymaking*, a memoir, and *Helping mothers, helping babies* by Leslie Ann Costello, a manual that can be of assistance to therapists who encounter postpartum difficulties in their patients.

Dear readers, we remind you that we are very interested in reading the books you publish and, when possible, we will review it in our Journal.

Maria Rosaria Filoni

The Uniqueness of Bioenergetic Analysis

Atlanta, USA, October 8–12, 2025

Maria Rosaria Filoni, Garry Cockburn, Scott Baum & Yael Harel

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Abstracts

In this section of the journal, our goal is to share with readers as much of the content of the Atlanta Conference, which took place in October 2025. To try to achieve this goal we publish summaries of the presentations of the plenary sessions and the abstracts of all the workshops.

Keywords: Bioenergetic Analysis, energy, psychoanalysis, trauma, dialogue

A Singularidade da Análise Bioenergética

Atlanta, EUA, 8 a 12 de outubro de 2025 (Portuguese)

Nesta seção da revista, nosso objetivo é compartilhar com os leitores o máximo possível do conteúdo da Conferência de Atlanta, que ocorreu em outubro de 2025. Para tentar atingir esse objetivo, publicamos resumos das apresentações das sessões plenárias e os resumos de todos os workshops.

L'unicité de l'analyse bioénergétique

Atlanta, États-Unis, 8–12 octobre 2025 (French)

Dans cette section de la revue, nous souhaitons partager avec nos lecteurs le plus grand nombre possible d'informations issues de la conférence d'Atlanta, qui s'est tenue en octobre 2025. À cette fin, nous publions des résumés des présentations des séances plénières ainsi que les résumés de tous les ateliers.

L'unicità dell'analisi bioenergetica

Atlanta, USA, 8–12 ottobre 2025 (Italian)

In questa sezione della rivista, il nostro obiettivo è condividere con i lettori il maggior numero possibile di contenuti della Conferenza di Atlanta, tenutasi nell'otto-

bre 2025. Per raggiungere questo obiettivo, pubblichiamo i riassunti delle presentazioni delle sessioni plenarie e gli abstract di tutti i workshop.

Die Einzigartigkeit der bioenergetischen Analyse Atlanta, USA, 8.–12. Oktober 2025 (German)

In diesem Abschnitt der Zeitschrift möchten wir den Lesern möglichst viele Inhalte der Konferenz in Atlanta zugänglich machen, die im Oktober 2025 stattfand. Zu diesem Zweck veröffentlichen wir Zusammenfassungen der Plenarvorträge und Abstracts aller Workshops.

Уникальность биоэнергетического анализа Атланта, США, 8–12 октября 2025 года (Russian)

В этом разделе журнала наша цель – поделиться с читателями как можно большим количеством материалов конференции в Атланте, которая состоялась в октябре 2025 г. Чтобы попытаться достичь этой цели, мы публикуем резюме выступлений на пленарных заседаниях и тезисы докладов всех семинаров.

Las características distintivas del análisis bioenergético Atlanta, EE. UU., 8–12 de octubre de 2025 (Spanish)

En esta sección, nuestro propósito es ofrecer una selección representativa de las ponencias y demás contribuciones presentadas durante la Conferencia de Atlanta, realizada en octubre de 2025. Con este fin, incluimos los resúmenes de las presentaciones de las sesiones plenarias, así como los resúmenes de los talleres.

躯体动力分析的独特性 2025年10月8日至12日, 美国亚特兰大 (Chinese)

本期刊特辑旨在向读者全面呈现2025年10月举办的亚特兰大会议核心内容。为实现这一目标，我们出版了全体研讨会议报告及所有工作坊的摘要。

Wyjątkowość Analizy Bioenergetycznej Atlanta, USA, 8–12 października 2025 (Polish)

W tej części czasopisma naszym celem jest przekazanie czytelnikom jak największej ilości treści z Konferencji w Atlancie, która odbyła się w październiku 2025 roku. Starając się osiągnąć ten cel, publikujemy streszczenia prezentacji sesji plenarnych oraz abstrakty wszystkich warsztatów.

Contemporary Theory and Practice of Psychoanalytic and Bioenergetic Psychotherapy

Summary of Presentation by Dr Nancy McWilliams

The Current Context

Dr McWilliams gave an overview of the challenging context facing psychoanalytic and bioenergetic psychotherapists. Many psychotherapists feel the relentless pressure to redefine themselves as technicians rather than as healers, and the pressure to be experts with the “skills and pills” necessary for symptom reduction by using short-term manualized interventions. Psychotherapists know that people come for more than symptom reduction. They come to find meaning and to make their life better.

These pressures are coming from the pharmaceutical corporations, who can then prescribe drugs to reduce the symptoms associated with the various DSM disorders. Pressures also come from governmental funding agencies and insurance companies, as short-term therapies cost them less. And lastly, pressure comes from the academic and research worlds where tenure and promotion often depend on getting grants for the publication of evidence-based research. These studies are often reports of short-term, manualized treatments, with narrow definitions of evidence, where patients with complex presentations have been excluded from the sample being studied, and where efficacy is judged by measurable symptom reduction.

Dr McWilliams also highlighted the sociocultural attacks on normal embodiment, such as the pressure for cosmetic surgeries, hormonal treatments, the premature sexualization of children, and the pursuit of excessive musculature in men. From a therapeutic perspective, we are seeing an increase in disorders where patients hurt themselves, burn themselves, starve themselves, and otherwise dissociate themselves from their physicality.

Importance of Personality and Relationship Factors

Referencing the current emphasis on “evidence-based” interventions, Dr McWilliams highlighted that there is significant evidence showing

there are two factors that correlate with psychological change – and neither of them involves manualized control trials of specific techniques. The first is the personality of both the patient and the therapist, and the second is relationship factors, or the fit between the two personalities. These two factors account for 85 % of the variance of psychotherapy outcomes irrespective of the name of the treatment delivered. John Norcross and others within the humanistic tradition within the American Psychological Association (Division 29) have put together a list of impressive empirical studies showing the importance of personality and relationship for therapeutic change.

While symptom reduction is important, Dr McWilliams's book *Psychoanalytic Supervision* gives a comprehensive list of 10 vital signs of mental health, including several aspects involving the body: greater attachment security; improved self- and object constancy; increased sense of agency; movement toward more realistic and reliable self-esteem; greater resilience and affect regulation; more ability to reflect on the self and mentalize others; increased comfort in both communality and individuality; a more robust sense of vitality; the development of improved capacities for acceptance, forgiveness, and gratitude; and the overarching capacities to love, work and play. Dr McWilliams noted there has been an enthusiastic reception of this chapter in the book throughout the world, as it provides a way of talking about what all psychotherapists are trying to do with patients that goes well beyond symptom reduction.

Contemporary Psychoanalysis and the Body

Contemporary psychoanalysis is now much more open to the knowledge of the body such as exists in the bioenergetic analysis tradition. Freud's Enlightenment-era approach gave rise to theories about the irrational body and ideas of controlling, suppressing and repressing the body and its drives. Starting in the 1980's there was the rediscovery of dissociative identity disorder and the beginnings of talking about trauma. Judith Herman's work on sexual abuse, in a way, rediscovered Freud's original work on sexual trauma and seduction theory before he revised his developmental theory. Contemporary relational psychoanalysis has paid a great deal of attention to understanding dissociation, not only in terms of dissociated mental states, but also dissociation from the

body. There has been much literature on somatization, alexithymia, and the expression of psychopathology through the body. Stanley Greenspan, the child psychiatrist, used to say, that if children are not given words for their feelings, they will either act out or get sick. The body does “keep the score”, as Bessel van der Kolk says. There is also a recognition that traumatized people need more than just talk therapy, and so there is an increased interest in approaches like EMDR, polyvagal theory, neurofeedback, and somatic experiencing, and recognition of the need for cathartic affective expression rather than just an intellectual understanding of trauma.

Panksepp’s research on mammalian emotions has reformulated drive theory, and Mark Solm’s new book presents a beautiful reinterpretation of Panksepp’s work. Panksepp discovered two different anxiety centres in the brain that are mediated by different neurotransmitters. The PANIC system deals with separation-distress and social-attachment processes. This system manages what clinicians have called “separation anxiety” and tends to be responsive to SSRIs. The FEAR system is the evolutionary legacy of our terror of predation, and is the anxiety that people feel when their concerns are about destruction or self-fragmentation. It is what clinicians have called “annihilation anxiety” and is responsive to the benzodiazepines and alcohol, but not the SSRIs, as it is not mediated by serotonin. Panksepp also discovered the PLAY system, and has documented how much all mammals, of both genders, need to play.

Panksepp’s research on the CARE system has been reinforced by empirical work on early caregiver communication by scholars such as Beatrice Beebe, Berry Brazelton, Colwyn Trevarthen, Karlen Lyons-Ruth, Daniel Stern, and Ed Tronick. There are also a lot of people researching what Allan Schore has called “right-brain to right-brain communication”.

In psychoanalysis there has been a revolution in attitudes toward countertransference. The classical Freudian attitude was that if a therapist cannot maintain a detached clinical attitude towards the client’s transferences, then there is something unfinished in the therapist’s own analysis. Today there is an acceptance that all therapists feel strong countertransferences, sometimes of high intensity. These feelings are not only expectable, they are useful for understanding what the patient is communicating. Dr McWilliams recommended Richard Cheftetz’s book *Intensive Psychotherapy for Persistent Dissociated Processes*, pointing out that the subtitle of the book is *The Fear of Feeling Real*.