

Some philosophical aspects as to fascia.

A personal journey through (the) fascia(land), or:

MY CREDO as to FASCIA

In this lecture / course I will follow more or less the path of recognition that I traveled through the land of fascia on my own.

It will be so to say my way or My fascia: my scientific biography through the landscape of fascia.

I am a relative outsider. I am not a practitioner working with fascia, I started as a medical anatomist. For me fascia was not something like a general system or even organ, fascia was like “muscle” spilt up in anatomical structures and elements (fascia lata, fascia generalis, fascia cruris, etc. etc.)..

So I will start to tell about my work as anatomist, as an expert in the anatomy of connective tissue in the so-called locomotor system. In studying the mechanical relationships between skeleton, connective tissue structures and muscle. I became aware of the fact that not anatomy but its architecture is the central functional item to understand the so-called anatomy of connective tissue.

In those days I was just a regular medical anatomist and for me the notion “The fascia” as it most of the time is applied by osteopaths was not familiar to me. Of course there was something like “fascia generalis” covering and enveloping structures and organs and I knew about fasciae (plural) enveloping structures or muscles in the locomotor system, but something like the fascia as a functional system in the body was not a notion that is familiar in medical research and medical biology.

I became intrigued by and specialized in connective tissue anatomy which very soon started to be architecture; notions like continuities, in series organization, of connective and muscle tissue came up. I started to dig a deductive research hole and found my self deeply narrow-mindedly and specialized involve in “The morphological substrate of proprioception in the lateral elbow region of the rat”. Next I came out of my research pit and inductively I started to see and teach about general concepts like connective tissue architecture, the sense and particularly the non-sense of “muscle man thinking” in the musculo-skeletal system.

One of the major consequences of describing the organization of the connective tissue in the so-called locomotor system as architecture, was that apparently the muscle is not the functional or architectural unit of the locomotor apparatus. When it came out that also the organization of proprioception and mechanoreceptors was not according to anatomical units like muscles, ligaments, aponeurosis, and fasciae, this again gave arguments for the idea that not the classical anatomical units like muscles are the functional units in the locomotor system. This also was much more in harmony with the physiological notions as to locomotion, for example that the units of muscle organization is the motor unit and that on the other hand the cortical brain is not organized in muscles, ligaments or other anatomical structures, but in is organized in motion: “The brain knows nothing about the muscles”.

Locomotion appeared to me not be a skeleton moved by muscles which on their turn are innervated (“moved”) by a central nervous system. Locomotion became stature and motion, shaping your body Gestalt steered and controlled by a nervous system, not caused. Skeleton as well a brain became necessary but not sufficient conditions and ingredients of the system for posturing and motion.

And more or less separate from my scientific career as a kinesiologist, I developed a phenomenological embryology. The phenomenological approach is not about finding explanations or causes for certain biological phenomena, but intends to find meaning and significance. From anatomist, analyzing and dissecting literally the body into separate structures and elements, I became morphologist, searching for the (functional) meaning of the form or structure.

This work brought me in contact with osteopathy and osteopaths. They talk about the fascia, they consider more or less the fascial system to be a functional system in the body. Schleip et al for example, consider the fascia as a kind of communication organ. Osteopaths seemed to be able to manipulate the connective tissue and to be able to influence the functionality of connective tissue.

Next I met osteopathy but that was in the context of my other “leg’: the teaching about organization of the body in prenatal life: phenomenological embryology. Again I met notions like continuity and architecture, about shaping and Gestaltung en met the fascia again as one of the appearances of the Meso which, what I learned from the embryo as most important thing, is NOT anatomy but (one of) the architectural matrix principles of the body. That brought me here with a fasciasophy, an embryosophy, tilting anatomy to functional concepts (“We are not machines, we are processes”) and dealing with fascia and germ layers as functions (!) of the body.

On the other hand, this work brought me in contact with the embryology of innerness. Blechschmidt and with his few on the 3 so-called germ layers. From his work I learned that the meso (usually and officially indicated as mesoderm) is quite a different dimension than the other two germ layers ectodermal and endoderm ¹.

Next I heard about AT Still notions of “soul dwelling in the fascia”. Then it all comes to place in this lecture where I will try to defend the stance that anatomy is the worst mind and methodology to understand the body as instrument of soul and as a psychosomatic entity that we not only ARE but also HAVE. Standing up, straight against the narrow-minded and reduced notion that we are walking machines or zombies (real “living dead”) controlled and steered by a head organ (the brain).

In this way to frames or concepts more or less came together and started to intensify each other. I recognized the meso as the germ layer of innerness and mediation which requires not an anatomical mind, but an architectural to describe its functional organization. As to the locomotor system, it became obvious that connective tissue could be considered as the matrix tissue and that the connective tissue apparatus more or less is the complement of the muscle (man) apparatus. And that they do not only function in parallel to each other, but also and more often in series with each other. This led to the notion that the skeletal elements are connected with each

¹ **Endoderm** is one of the three primary germ layers in the very early human embryo. The other two layers are the ectoderm (outside layer) and mesoderm (middle layer), with the endoderm being the innermost layer

other by units of tissue that are in principle constituted by connective as well as muscle tissue and that the locomotor system more and more became functionally understandable as an apparatus of two principle and not on three principles.

The domain of fascia more and more came to my mind as the possible organ or a system of innerness. In this context, it should be realized that an eventual organ of innerness is a contradiction internists, because “innerness” in my phenomenological view is not about anatomy, is not about the inside. Organ is an anatomical notion, organs are spatial elements and units, but innerness has to do with connecting and shaping space, with the in-between, with architecture. Innerness does not have an organ, is not topographically located. And in this way the notions of Andrew Taylor still regarding the fascia as “the domain of soul” became more and more a “logical” so to say a “morphological” notion.

Important questions are raised. Is the fascia an apparatus composed of connective tissue elements like the muscular apparatus is composed from muscles? In the recently published book by Robert Schleip at all is called ‘the anatomy of the fascia’, Andrew Taylor still often speaks about the fasciae in the body. Or is the fascia the system, an architectural matrix organization of connective tissue and derivatives constructing the innerness of the body? Or is the fascia ONE of the organs of innerness and are there more systems are organs or tissues functioning in this respect? For example blood.

The post-Cartesian mind of topography & locality (‘space’) , causality might bring us to understanding of The Human Body (“being”) but never will lead to understand Ourselves (“Our Selves”), being incapable to acknowledge and appreciate the reality that we live, which is not similar to the reality as we THINK and observe it is! This lecture is about my journey and about the preliminary outcome of the quest. Fasten your seatbelt, you are going to lose safe ground when you give up causality, topography (space).

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Jaap van der Wal MD PhD

Anatomist and Embryologist
Structuralist and functionalist
Warp and woof thinker
Phenomenologist