

“Humanity has no other alternative before it today than either to learn again about the whole web of natural and cosmic connections, or to let both Nature and humanity degenerate and die out. As in the past it is imperative that our knowledge should penetrate to the actual structure of Nature.

Look at a plant growing directly out of the soil. True, it is hovered-around, enshrouded in an astral cloud. Up there however, round about the tree, the astrality is far denser. Once more, it *is* far denser. Our *trees* are gatherings of astral substance; quite clearly, they are *gatherers of astral substance*.

... through the flying world of insects, we may say, the right astralisation is brought about in the air. Now this astralisation of the air is always in a mutual connection with the woodland or forests, which guide the astrality in the right way - just as the blood in our body is guided by certain forces.

... so we must look for a due distribution of wood and forest, orchard and shrubbery, and meadow-lands with their natural growth of mushrooms. This is the very essence of good farming, and we shall attain far more by such means, even if we reduce to some extent the surface available for tillage.”

Rudolf Steiner, Koberwitz, 1924

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The agricultural organism in the ethers, Elements, physical forces and preparations:

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INTRODUCTION

Our subject is one of the most interesting, intricate and difficult subjects in biodynamic agriculture. The arrangement and proportions of the organs within a farm on the basis of a vision of a living organism is fundamental to fertility, health and productivity. Of course today a study of this kind may seem confusing - or even unnecessary - in a time of monocultures and intensive exploitation of natural resources. This is different in the countries of central and northern Europe where people have always shown a greater sensitivity - we might call it an art – towards design and landscaping, including productivity in the case of a farm.

We must turn to the genius of Rudolf Steiner – the founder of Anthroposophy of which biodynamics is a part – who, in the 1920s, set the spiritual-scientific stage for new knowledge. It is this work to which man must now aspire with urgency if he wants to break the cycle of environmental degradation and depleted nutrition.

The author is aware that his contribution pales before the vastness and complexity of the issue to be addressed. However, faced with very few studies developed by the biodynamic movement on this subject, even such a small submission might help those who wish to explore this subject

Enzo Nastati

ORGANS OF THE AGRICULTURAL ORGANISM (FIRST ASPECT)

We should establish what we mean by the term organism. We use this term to mean a group of organs, each with its own specific roles and functions, which collaborate to enable some higher activities or function. If we consider a human we can say that a person is not only an intestine that digests, a lung that breathes, or a kidney that filters and so on. A human has a higher function manifested by the capacities to reason, to love and to act freely. We will also find certain organs on our farm, and when we look at particulars we will see that there really are many. If each is balanced and healthy then this higher function can manifest more completely. If, for example, the liver begins to fail, we know that it also affects the total organization. The same is the case on a farm, although the organs are clearly not liver or lungs but, for example, a forest, orchard or meadow, etc. Consequently it is essential that the organs are both healthy and balanced with the others so that the performance of this higher function is unhindered.

The higher function that the agricultural organism makes possible is the ability to "talk" to the world of planets. For our modern consciousness this possibility is absent. It no longer exists. On the threshold of the twenty-first century no one knows what the Moon does in the sky, let alone Mars or Jupiter. Such things are absolute dead ends for us now, but it's exactly what we want to discuss.

Write the word "planet" and remove the "e", and you will have the word "plant." This works in Italian, and English and some other languages. If we consider that old timers gave names to things aware of the spiritual forces that were "behind" these things, then we understand a little why the word "plant" lurks within in the word "planet". For us, for our consciousness, this remains hidden, and so we must try to regain this knowledge. To work with plants, for example or the regeneration of seeds, we must reconnect them to their origin and this origin is in the planetary sphere, while the origin of animals is in the sphere of the Zodiac.

We have thus established that we are interested in the agricultural organism to enable this higher feature. To achieve this we always need a few years or even more, depending on the individual case.

If we consider the example of the agricultural landscape that surrounds us here in the hills of Parma, we will find great beauty and that there is great potential for life. However, from the standpoint of the agricultural organism, something is not working and it is as if these places are "blocked." Such a possibility is close and it would take little effort to start the recovery, but every time I look around here I always have the impression of something enchanted. Perhaps to you who live here this does not seem to be the case, but in me the feeling arises that everything is in place but there is no dialogue or communication. There are the organs but they cannot collaborate.

Bring to mind something you know very well already - that Earth forces are concentrated in the root, Water forces in the leaves, Air forces in the flowers and the Fire forces in the fruit.

We will not draw this on the blackboard in relation to the plant as we usually do, but along a horizontal axis (Fig. 1). On the left, related to the Earth Element, we have the world of calcium, on the right is the realm of silica and clay holds the middle ground. The forces of earth and water are those connected with gravity and weightiness, while the Air / Fire forces are linked to the processes of sublimation and of levity.

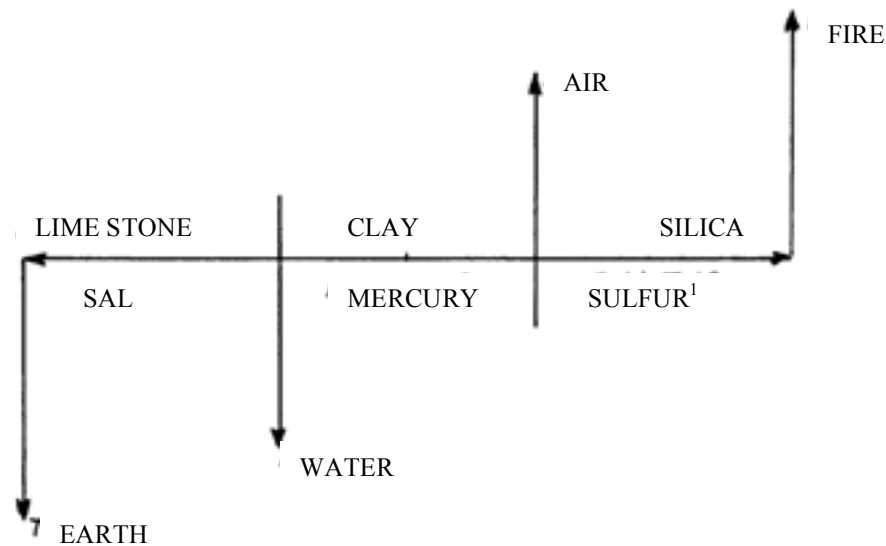


Fig. 1: 4 Elements, 3-foldness and soil minerals

If you remember¹ in humans Earth manifests as the bones, Water is the endocrine system, Air is our respiratory and nervous systems, while Fire is shown in our body temperature of 37° C. When one has rheumatism, what has taken place? Water has entered the Earth, into the bones, and we begin to "crack." A natural cure for this problem is 'sanding'. Sanding means to immerse the effected parts in warm sand. The sand is composed of silica and is heated by the sun. The sand has about 50% air by volume as air spaces. This sanding "infiltrates" Air and Fire, the opposite pole. This age-old practice already helps us understand these relationships. If there is an excess of one part we must balance with the opposite. We could talk at length about this and various other natural therapies, including those for plants.

For example, fungal issues are associated with the influence of Earth and Water and sulphur is normally used to combat such problems. Sulphur burns and when it burns it emits heat and light. Actually it is a dirty light and sulphur in our sketch stands by silica on the right pole, while fungus would sit on the other, by limestone.

Take tree paste for example. This is a paste that is spread on the outer bark of the trunk of the trees in winter. It is made from $\frac{1}{3}$ manure (which represents limestone-Earth), $\frac{1}{3}$ sand (silica) and $\frac{1}{3}$ clay. Water is added in the form of a decoction of Horsetail - which is silica - to which is added a 5% sodium silicate solution, which assists the coverage and makes it harder for it to be washed away.

Actually, when we apply a therapy we must always enter all three gestures (limestone, clay and silica), because to administer a single principle is almost never ideal. Just as in natural colours the red always has some green and natural greens always have a little red, so we put all three main gestures, but with one dominant to address the specific issue. In the tree paste the horsetail, sodium silicate and sand, all go toward the silica pole because this is happening in an orchard, and the tree paste that we use on fruit trees guides the tree towards flowering and fruiting (Air and Fire).

If the soil is calcareous fruiting plants will struggle to blossom so we do not put $\frac{1}{3}$ of all ingredients, but increase the proportion of sand up to 50%. This is the reason why you should not just repeat recipes. If you read a book with the tree paste recipe and you do as is written even though your orchard is in calcareous soil, you risk getting unbalanced trees.

¹ For example see lecture called "The Earth as a living organism" in the book "Basis of Biodynamics in Nine Meetings" by the author. All the author's books in English are available via www.moodie.biz

² Sulphur is the chemical element, whilst sulfur is the expansive pole of the archetypal threefoldness completed by mercury and sal.

The best way to destroy an orchard is to give them lime as a pesticide in winter, because lime is on the far left in the drawing, and thus inhibits flowering. One ruins the plants' ability to connect with light and warmth, and a fruit tree is light and heat.

This is just one example, only a hint. For powdery mildew and botrytis, biodynamics never uses sulphur alone, but uses a mixture if strictly necessary: sulphur, calcified seaweed, and bentonite. This is a good example of how you should always use the three parts with one emphasised. A unilateral remedy is always something difficult to digest for a living being. One must give a main gesture with the others in subordinate accompaniment.

Consider an unspecified plant and follow its development. The sown seed first undergoes an expansive phase visible through the radicle and cotyledons followed by the leaves. This is followed by a contraction into the green calyx. Then there is another expansion as petal after petal emerges, followed by another contraction. What is this next contraction? It is a focus into the reproductive apparatus of stamens and pistils. The next process of expansion develops the ovaries into fruit. At this point the plant has grown.

The plant lives in this process of three contractions and three expansions. Following the hermetic alchemists we can call the process of contraction *sal*, *sulfur* the phase of expansion and *mercury* that which brings equilibrium and which enables the transition between the two poles.

Now see how our blackboard sketch has developed: Earth, Water, Air, Fire, *Sal*, *Mercury* and *Sulfur*. Seven like the seven notes. *Sal* is located between Earth and Water, *Mercury* between Water and Air, and *Sulfur* between Air and Fire.

The first image we have of an agricultural organism is that of a piano. How many octaves are there on a piano? Seven octaves (with some small variation depending on the model) composed of C, D, E, F, G, A, B, ... and then again higher. These are our basic seven notes, and then there are another seven for a total of seven times seven. If we want to play the chord of C, which consists of the notes C, E, G, it may be that this chord – referring now to the organs of the agricultural organism - is like "Earth" plus "sal principle" plus "water" and so on. These are the three keys to make a C-chord. We do not yet know what this means for a farmer's field to grow good turnips for example.

If we are trying to play the chord of C on a keyboard and we have no E because we have a broken key, then we can move to the next octave where there is a functional E. It will not be exactly the same to a good ear, but it will still be a passable chord of C. This 'broken key' analogue might be that we do not have enough water for a particular crop. Since we do not find this requirement in this physical octave we look to the nearest octave which does not offer water from a borehole, but a complimentary watery organ from this other octave or spectrum. We'll see how this organ can be a functional substitute for the scarce physical water. If we can't find anything on the next octave we have to look to the other octaves.

Working a farm is like playing a church organ, because if everything is in harmony it is like a symphony. We repeat again, if we do not have the E (an organ) on the first octave we must take it from the nearby octaves. The care of a farmer is to play the right "chords" because if we have not sown at the best time, perhaps because it was not a favourable time, then we must be alert enough to say: "My song that was called "beet" is out of tune," perhaps because we see fungi, nematodes or other things like that. We must, therefore, re-establish balance. Health is always balance.

	SAL MERCURY SULFUR				
	EARTH	WATER	AIR	FIRE	
	C O M M U N I T Y				9
	SIDEREAL MOON AND STARS		SYNODIC MOON AND PLANETS		8
	502	503	504	505	506 507
	500	FLADEN		501	7
	FULL MOON		NEW MOON		6
	MULCHING NEAR WINTER CULTIVATION	IRRIGATION MANURING	HOEING	NEAR SUMMER CULTIVATION	5
		RUMINANTS			
	PIG	CHICKEN	SHEEP	HORSE	4
		AMPHIBIANS		BEEES	
	ANTS -	WORMS	INSECTS	BIRDS	3
	ROOTS	HUMUS	WOODLANDS		
	FIBROUS TAP	FRESH MATURE	ORCHARDS		2
		SOWING	HEDGES		
	CLAY	FROST	DEW		
	LIME SILICA	RAIN	SNOW	WIND	N - S - E - W
		STAGNANT - FLOWING- MISTS		LUMINOUS EAST	ASPECTS
					1

B I O D Y N A M I C

O R G A N I C

A N I M A L

P L A N T
P A S S I V E

Fig 2. Levels or octaves of the agricultural organism

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Thanks

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