

## 2012

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**Tatiana De Barelli**

*The Child with an Umbrella: A Tool for Understanding  
Self-Esteem and Defense Mechanisms*



**Monique Stirling**

*Tension in Handwriting*

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**Betty Rozakis**

*Know Yourself, Your Relationships and Your Solutions  
through Handwriting and Tree Drawings*



# 2012 SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

March 10

## Tatiana De Barelli

*The Child with an Umbrella:  
A Tool for Understanding  
Self-Esteem  
and Defense  
Mechanisms*

**Tatiana De Barelli** is a Belgian graphologist and educational psychologist. Tatiana works with teachers and therapists to teach effective tools for working with children in graphism, and has her own consultation practice for children. She has a degree in education from the University of Brussels and is author of *Les Enjeux l'Écrire*, with Graziella Pettinati, a book on children's writing.

She has adapted the test called "The Child with an Umbrella" which she uses as a complement to the graphotherapy assessment. Tatiana's presentation discusses how this test can express a child's mental landscape and reveal issues of self-esteem, defense mechanisms, maturity and logic.

The test instructions ask the child to "Draw a child with an umbrella, in the rain".

The child must be able to choose the orientation of his paper in Portrait or Landscape.

### Important observations and questions are:

- Although there is no time limit, how much time is spent on each element and in what order are they drawn?
- Is the child drawing alone or with others?
- How are the instructions followed? Are there many corrections?
- What are the dominant features? Is the general atmosphere happy, sad, harmonious, etc.?



### **Tatiana De Barelli** *(continued)*

We interpret the use of space, pressure and stroke in the same way as with handwriting.

The way the paper is placed can indicate a taste for drawing (Landscape) or a predilection for written language (Portrait)

The child's drawing shows us the perception he has of reality. We, therefore, enter into his imagination and his way of articulating and feeling the world around him.

#### **Some interpretations among others:**

- The hands symbolize the impact that the child has in front of the events. The clouds and the rain are either threatening or sympathetic: they represent the perception of difficulties but also of learning.
- The addition of written words indicates a desire to communicate.
- Lots of empty space indicates anxiety.
- Feet are active and indicate the way to settle into daily life.
- Attitude, location, or size provide valuable indicators of self-esteem.
- Size and position of umbrella show defensiveness.
- Raindrops add precision.

Conference participants began by making their own drawings and then discussing them. Website : [www.educart.be](http://www.educart.be) Mail : [tatianadebarelli@yahoo.fr](mailto:tatianadebarelli@yahoo.fr) ■

# 2012 CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

May 12

**Monique  
Stirling**

*Tension in  
Handwriting*

**Monique Stirling**, received her training and degrees in graphology from the British Academy of Graphology and taught graphology at the British Academy for many years. Monique has been an invaluable gift for English speaking graphologists. She has translated a number of French texts and articles into English, including the work of Max Pulver and Jacqueline Peugeot, among others.

## **Defining Tension**

First I intend to define what tension in a handwriting is. But before doing so, I wish to dispel the idea that tension is seen in the elasticity or stiffness of the stroke, a notion which is still found in highly respected graphology manuals. Let me give you an analogy with knitting.

The stroke is the raw material with which we write. It can be compared to the raw material, be it wool, cotton or synthetic thread with which we knit; it can be soft, smooth, thick or thin. According to whether they knit tightly with tension or loosely with little tension, two knitters given identical thread, needles and knitting pattern, are likely to produce different textures and sizes of the finished garments although they followed the same instructions.

Similarly, the stroke, that raw material with which we write, is not in itself what produces the tension. It is how we handle it in order to form the letters and move across the page that will indicate the tension. Identical writing instruments and writing surfaces handled by two different scriptors is more likely than not to produce handwritings with different tension. Tension originates from within the individual and will be seen in the movement produced by the hand moving lightly or heavily across the page, giving a tight or loose appearance to the whole handwriting.

Tension will also affect how the letters are put down (movement of inscription) and how the space is occupied.

Tension in handwriting shows the degree of stiffness, or suppleness in the way the ductus (or written trail, the 'trace' as the French call it) progresses across the page. It relates to contraction and release and is seen in the overall pattern of a handwriting.

Tension is assessed on a continuum from insufficient to excessive. Not enough tension, or too much, damages the rhythm of a writing.

Modern German graphology uses Dr. Rudolph Pophal's system of rating tension in five degrees: I, II, III, IV a or b and V. Pophal was a 20th century German neurologist and graphologist. His major contribution to graphology was to have shown the combined action of impulses and control expressed in tension. Similarly, but not exactly, French methods grade tension in handwriting on the following continuum: slack, supple, firm, taut, rigid.

The descriptions and interpretations given below are based on both the German and French systems and also take into account more recent empirical studies.

**Monique Stirling**  
*(continued)*

When assessing tension, which should be done early when analyzing a handwriting, the items mentioned in the descriptions of the degrees need not all be present. A few are enough to classify a handwriting as being overall supple, taut or firm. Some handwritings cannot be assigned a degree of tension, which does not at all mean that they cannot be analysed.



Tension being on a continuum, a handwriting can sit somewhere between two degrees, for instance between Firm and Taut. The graphic context will guide us as to what belongs to each of the two. Usually, handwritings show an overall degree of tension, interspersed with one or two other degrees, which cannot be ignored. Bear in mind also that very different-looking handwritings can share the same degree of tension.

Tension is marked by one’s temperament, upbringing, and how one uses these in relation to the outside world (adaptation). It enables the scriptor to muster his/her available energy to reach goals. The degree of tension indicates use of one’s will and one’s mode of adaptation, the flexibility of one’s attitudes and the control over one’s emotions and drives. This may vary according to circumstances as an increase or a decrease in psychological tension produces increased or decreased muscular tension.

**DEGREES OF TENSION**

**SLACK (similar to Pophal I)**

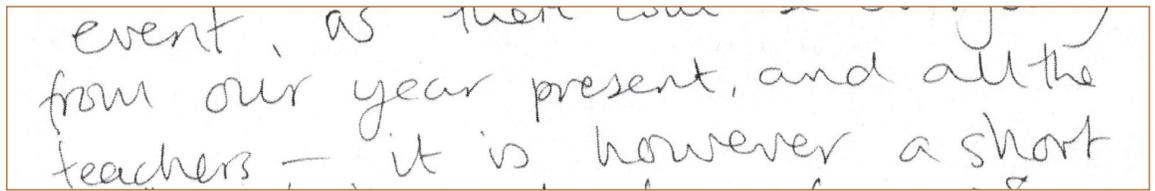
**Description**

Poorly controlled movement, with frequent concomitant effect of disorder; a light, flat, pasty, limp stroke, imprecise letter forms, threadiness, double curves, neglect, illegibility and/or clumsiness; irregularities of vvarious sorts, usually on the slow side; generally rather large dimension, spread out, inflated; lack of proportions; a sinuous baseline. While such writings are often sub-vital, some others are hyper-vital (less limp with a more rapid even frenzied ductus), but in both cases they lack proper restraint.

**Interpretation**

Lack of backbone, lack of goal-oriented drive, carelessness, impulsiveness. Not much resistance to temptation; need to satisfy one's urges immediately. Pleasure principle. Surface adaptability. Laziness, lack of discipline and perseverance. Lability. Uncertainty about the self and the world in general, immaturity. Some possible positive elements: spontaneity, availability, intuition and a possible gift for improvisation, probably with little common sense, or structuring strength.

**Monique Stirling**  
(continued)



**Man 20. Rather slack with some stiffenings; light pressure. Irregularities of dimensions and slant, but clear letter forms and fair spacing.**

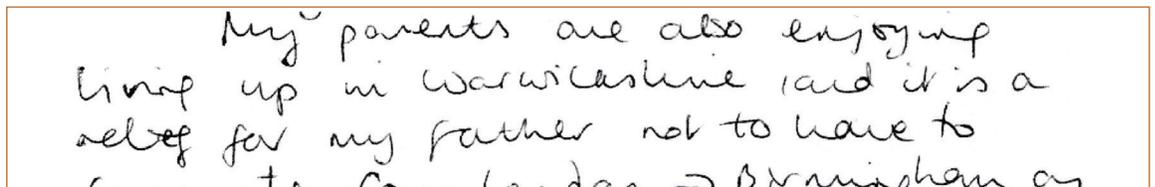
**SUPPLE (Pophal II)**

**Description**

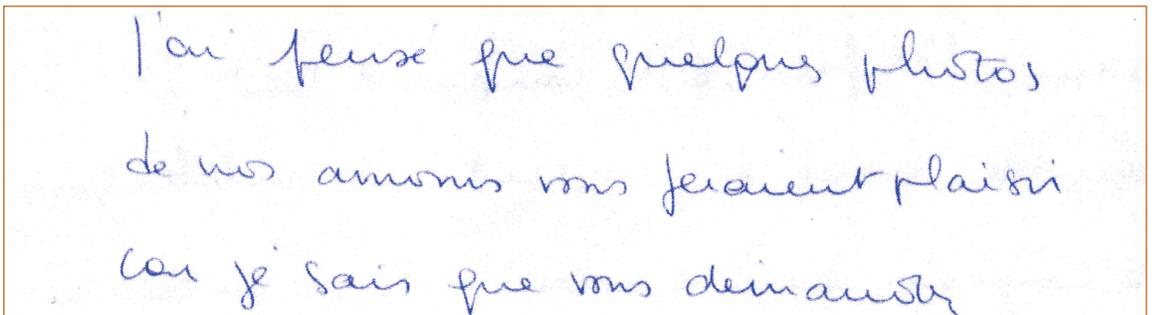
Fluid back and forth movements. Flowing movement in balance with the form and often slight emphasis on movement; an evenly-coordinated, elastic ductus, with no waste of energy; poised speed. Simple forms, more curved than linear; full rather than narrow garlands; usually connected and right-slanted. Light to medium pressure. Measured pace, or rhythmic partly owing to relief on the upstroke, as release is stronger than contraction, progressive; freedom in the layout, but no disorder.

**Interpretation**

Naturalness, ease with oneself; flexibility and easy adaptation to people and situations; relaxation, but not weakness; economy of energy and psychic effort; trust, spontaneity. Ability to enjoy life; cheerfulness; conciliating attitudes; receptivity; friendliness, sympathy; sociability, not necessarily with social feeling if the writing is not particularly progressive.



**Woman, 19. Supple with occasional stiffenings. Light pressure.**



**Woman 35. Blue biro, light and precise stroke**

## Monique Stirling

*(continued)*

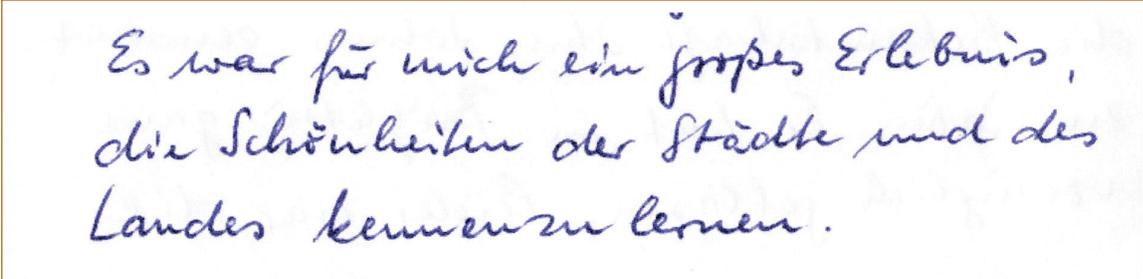
### FIRM (Pophal III)

#### Description

Rhythmic or measured, controlled or dynamic movement, with no rigidity (still flexible and fluent); possible dynamism giving an impression of drive; a well-maintained stroke both in pressure and texture; good dialogue between white and black; moderate dimensions and good proportions with nuanced irregularities; well-kept direction both in the slant and the baseline; poised to rapid; legible and rather simple forms; mixture of curves and angles.

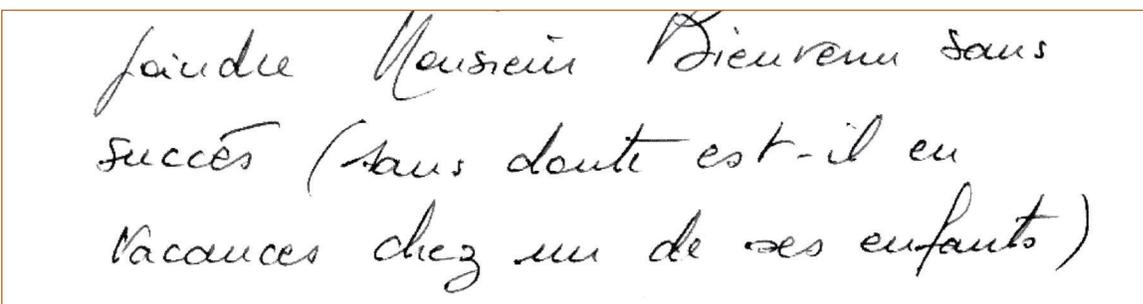
#### Interpretation

Good mental organization, with or without originality. Reason is in charge and can dominate emotions. Self-confidence, Self-control without stiffness. Reflection, concentration, efficiency. Well-channelled energy. Stability, endurance, resilience. Autonomy. Will-power without rigidity, hence rational adaptation.



Es war für mich ein großes Erlebnis,  
die Schönheit der Städte und des  
Landes kennen zu lernen.

**Man, 41. Blue fountain pen. Medium to strong pressure, nourished stroke, proportionate.**



j'aimerais Monsieur Dieux sans  
succès (sans doute est-il en  
vacances chez un de ses enfants)

**Woman, 58. Decidedly firm tension going towards Taut, heavy pressure.**

### TAUT (Pophal IVa excluding the inflexibility)

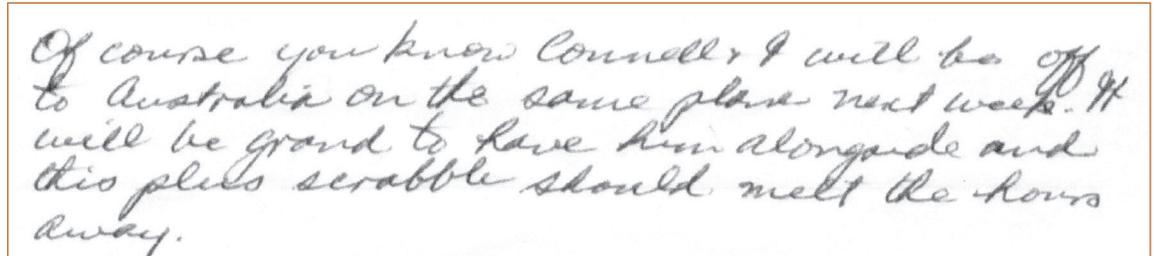
#### Description

Contraction is decidedly more important than release, pressure is reinforced and/or displaced on the horizontal with secondary widths; straight elements prevail; the curved ones are heavy, the garlands deep, narrow letters; obstructed or reared movement hinder fluid back and forth movements, but the writing does not necessarily lose agility or liveliness.

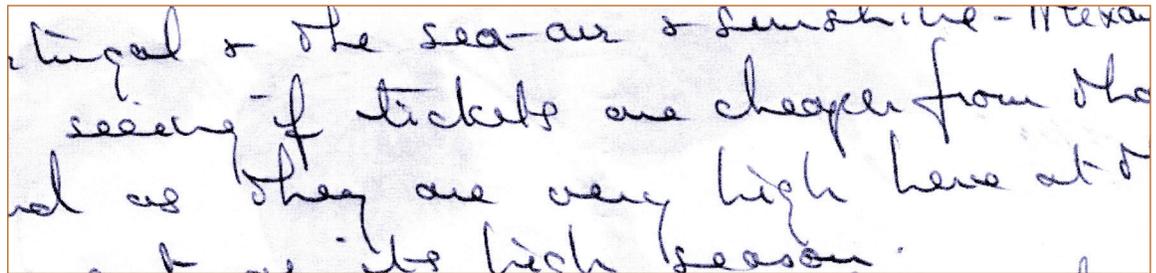
**Monique Stirling**  
*(continued)*

**Interpretation**

Strong-mindedness, will power, energy, greater reliance on oneself than on others. Pugnacity.



**Man 70, Black biro. Strong pressure, compact.**



**Woman 59. Dark blue biro. Taut with pressure which strongly embosses the paper**

**RIGID (Pophal IVa including elements of inflexibility)**

**Description**

As tension increases, the writing becomes rigid. Straight lines usually prevail - angular; over-structured, over-regular, with no elasticity even in curved forms - stiff arcades, deep garlands, straight sticks. with systemization of forms, movement, dimensions (frequently over-regular), layout and continuity, whether connected or disconnected. With over-regularity, rhythm becomes a mechanical beat; still, obstructed or reared movement. Vertical or left slant; medium, strong, furrowed, or/ and deviated pressure; furrowed or precise stroke. Speed not very rapid. Beware the degree of stiffness of a writing, from merely taut to rigid.

**Interpretation**

Will-power, self-surveillance, strict self-control, concentration. Courage, motivation, need to surpass or prove oneself. Frequent inflexibility with adaptation at the expense of effort and discipline. Determination, energy, aggression, combativeness. Self-reliance with distrust of the outside world. Defensive attitudes, possibly in reaction to earlier frustrations, or inferiority complex; compensation to conceal vulnerability. The interpretation will depend on the degree of stiffness (between stiffness and rigidity) and, as always, on the graphic context.

**Monique Stirling**  
(continued)

*If so, what are the criteria for assessing a pupil's request to be excluded? Ultimately, I feel that an issue like this can only be addressed in close consultation with the Principal, who bears responsibility for establishing and upholding policy.*

**Woman 40. Rigid with strong pressure.**

*Amidst the left-overs  
of a long rich life  
they still is concerned*

**Woman 75. Rigid with light and fine stroke**

contraction of the muscles of one side of her  
considerably distorting her features. The attack  
would sometimes last 24 hours. She was

**Man 55. Black biro. Strong pressure, especially on the lower zone prolonged sticks.**

**ANARCHIC (Similar to Pophal V)**

**Description**

Excessive stiffening giving an explosive aspect and leading to cramps, with resulting jerks and or, causing skidding slackening and a broken rhythm; angles and threads coexist; irregularities in all categories with discordant gestures, thrown movements; frequent prolongations in upper and lower zones; spasmodic stroke, sharp-points, clubs, jerks. Precise stroke, heavy, furrowed.

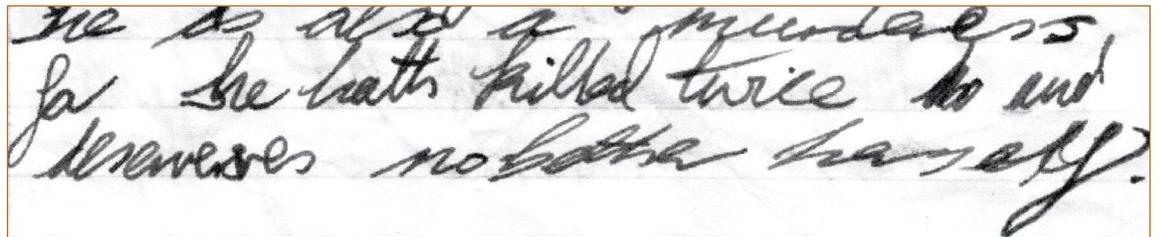
**Interpretation**

Restlessness, nervousness, excitability and inner conflicts. The subject is often too wrapped up in his own problems to be interested in others. Irritability, touchiness, distrust, defensiveness. Excessive reactivity, making the person difficult to live with, even though the writer may not be unsociable or lacking in social feeling. Difficulty with adaptation and social integration; possible behavioural, or pathological disorders.

*at the present, I have little  
opportunity to send you my  
warmest regards and best wishes*

**Man 39 black fountain pen. Irregular strong pressure.**

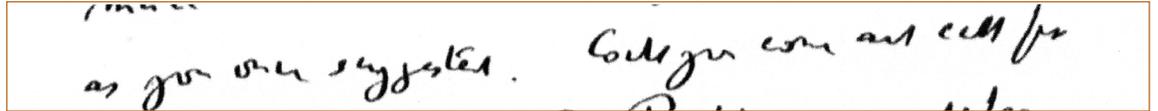
**Monique  
Stirling**  
(continued)



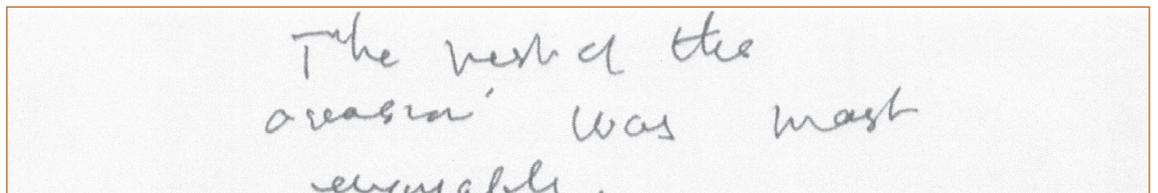
**Boy 13. Strong irregular pressure. This was written in a moment of anger after having been bullied.**

**Stiffenings**

It is important to bear in mind that even in "supple" or "firm" handwritings, there may be signs of this type of tension such as unexpected stiffenings like jerks or spasms to name but a few. In fact, in "slack" writing this is fairly frequent. They indicate that the writer is not free from temporary inhibitions, or reactive manifestations, or even that he could pull himself together under certain circumstances. Similarly, a voluntarily taut handwriting can present either a few involuntary signs in the form of sudden narrowness, jerks, lapses, irregularities of various sorts, which need interpreting. When a taut writing has a large number of these, Pophal categorises them in IVb as distinct from IVa where the scriptor is more able to control his tension.



**Man 53. Black fountain pen. Strong pressure**



**Woman 103 years old. Light pressure**

Also, various conditions, not dealt with here, such as ataxia, sudden emotions like fear or anger, lack of graphic fluency, to mention but a few, can cause sudden tensing up.

Finally, bear in mind that no moral judgment is to be passed on any of the degrees. More often than not in a handwriting there are positive signs that counterbalance or mitigate negative ones. A firm degree of tension may be desirable but does not necessarily make one a paragon of virtue. ■

# 2012 SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

October 27

## Betty Rozakis

*Know Yourself, Your Relationships and Your Solutions through Handwriting and Tree Drawings*

**Betty Rozakis**, lecturer, writer, and a graphologist for over 20 years, she brings a deep understanding of the importance of self-discovery through her experience with clients in a medical clinic. She earned her Advanced Diploma in graphology from the British Academy of Graphology and her Certification from Felix Klein. For those of you who want to read her book, *Coffee With the Subconscious*, it is available on her website: [www.coffeewithb.com](http://www.coffeewithb.com). Betty also has a B.A. from Baldwin-Wallace College.

This workshop explored a number of handwritings and tree drawings that reflect the personalities described in her book. The book itself does not contain illustrations. They were only presented during this workshop. Actual case studies were presented to illustrate the importance of handwriting analysis and tree drawings to help people understand themselves and facilitate positive growth. She presented the difference between “knowing yourself” and “not having a clue” and how that can enhance or devastate your relationships. ■

Visit Betty’s website at [bettyrozakis.com](http://bettyrozakis.com)



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