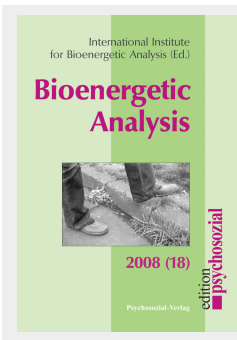


*Angela Klopstech*

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Günter Heisterkamp (eds).  
Psychoanalyse der Lebensbewegungen.  
Zum körperlichen Geschehen in der  
psychoanalytischen Therapie



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# Psychoanalyse der Lebensbewegungen. Zum körperlichen Geschehen in der psychoanalytischen Therapie – Ein Lehrbuch

Book Review by *Angela Klopstech*

German speaking thinkers and writers are excellent at compressing a complex concept that requires at least an entire paragraph in English into one (long) word. Metaphors like ‘Zeitgeist’ and ‘Weltanschauung’ are familiar to many therapists in the English speaking world who are philosophically, historically, or politically inclined, but how about the metaphor ‘Lebensbewegungen’? In “Psychoanalyse der Lebensbewegungen”, a recently published German reader, Peter Geißler and Günter Heisterkamp, chose this word creation as title for their edited collection of articles on bodily perspectives in psychoanalytic therapy.

It is a metaphor that, from a bioenergetic perspective, is intriguing and yet hard to translate. The best approximate translation seems to me “Psychoanalysis of Vitality“ or “Psychoanalysis of Human Living Processes” which captures the authors’ holistic inclinations to “view all utterances and expressions of the psyche, mental and bodily, as an integral part of an evolving whole” (p vii). It also captures to some degree their emphasis on the shaping and reshaping, and ever evolving nature of internal states and external expressions of the psyche. “Lebensbewegungen”, which might literally be translated as “movements of/in/into/towards/for life”, is an intriguing word construction because it has faint echoes of the Reichian principle of the pulsatory nature of all living processes. Intended by the authors or not, it seems appropriate for inclusion in the title of a book subtitled ‘A primer of reflections on the bodily dimension in psychoanalytic therapy’.

While we, bioenergeticists (my own word-creation, after all I was born German), are absorbing, redefining and integrating more and more of tradi-

tional and contemporary psychoanalytic concepts (articles in this issue and recent issues of 'Bioenergetic Analysis, the Clinical Journal of the IIBA' are testimony to this phenomenon), psychoanalysts, in turn, are doing the same with notions and concepts germane to body psychotherapy. This development is more advanced and professionally visible in the German/Austrian/Swiss axis than in the US. There, more publications are occurring in this arena by psychoanalysts and psychoanalysts turned analytical body psychotherapists. There is even a journal devoted to the theme "Psychoanalyse und Körper" (Psychoanalysis and the Body) with Geißler as editor.

These reaching out efforts from both sides have resulted in some overlap of conceptualizations and treatment approaches between bioenergetic analysis and body-oriented relational psychoanalysis, since both are psychodynamically based therapy schools, both employ and emphasize relational concepts, and both view bodily phenomena as essential to the enterprise. But there are also vast philosophical and treatment differences since the respective therapeutic frames remain quite apart from each other, and above all, the body is still at the heart of bioenergetic theory and practice while the relational aspect is at the heart of modern psychoanalysis. Being familiar with both, the overlap and the differences, can assist bioenergetic therapists in positioning themselves in the broader therapy world. And in this endeavor, this edited collection of articles can be helpful.

Starting out from the traditional notion that transference and counter-transference constitute the core of psychoanalytic treatment, Geißler and Heisterkamp arrive at a therapeutic setting called alternately analytical body psychotherapy or body-oriented analysis or body-based psychoanalysis (p vi, 301). This is a loosely defined "open setting" or "transitional space" that allows for and encourages a variety of interactions beyond the purely verbal. Heisterkamp states that "paying attention to and dealing with the bodily experience in the same measure as with the mental experience expands the realm of possibilities for the patient and brings childhood memories and present life situations into the present moment within the therapeutic encounter", and this results in "deepening the analytical process and expanding treatment possibilities" (p 300, 301). In this context of analytical body psychotherapy, the focus is on the bodily experience in the immediate interaction in the therapy dyad, the body 'in action' within the interaction, the body in the present moment and as the bearer of communication from within the patient and in between

patient and therapist. This view of the body is similar to the view of the body in contemporary bioenergetic analysis with one crucial difference: in bioenergetic analysis the body is not only defined via its subjective experience but equally dealt with as a physical entity in and for itself.

An important feature of the book as a whole is the fact that all contributors elaborate on relevant notions and concepts that belong within the expanded frame and transitional space created by emphasizing the interactive and the bodily aspect in psychoanalytic therapy: dialogic interaction (Handlungsdialog), hypothesis-guided interaction (Inszenierung), enactment, implicit relational knowing (implizites Beziehungswissen), body-related micro practices (körperliche Mikropraktiken), self regulation, etc. These are notions and concepts that either were redefined in relational terms or entered psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic writing in the last twenty years. In this context, most chapter authors straddle the divide between being analysts and body psychotherapists, and the editors themselves are both trained in psychoanalysis and bioenergetic analysis.

The reader begins with an introduction by the editors and a reflection on the theme as well as an overview of the various contributions by H.Müller-Braunschweig. There are then five parts to the book. The first deals with the foundational concepts of Analytical Body Psychotherapy, with contributions by J.Küchenhoff, U.Volz-Boers, S.Bettighofer, J.M.Scharff, P.Geißler and A.v.Arnim/P.Joraschky/H.Lausberg. Of particular interest here are the articles by Geißler and Bettighofer, because both give a detailed and profound overview of the professional field and terminology, the first with regard to developmental concepts, the latter with regard to transference/countertransference phenomena seen from an interactive perspective.

The second part focuses on general treatment aspects, with articles by G.Heisterkamp/P.Geißler, G.Worm, G.Poettgen-Havekost, T.Moser, G.Heisterkamp. Here Heisterkamp's article stands out because of the clinical relevance for everyday bioenergetic practice. He breaks the notion of interactive dyad/therapeutic encounter down into its nitty gritty details and components in order to take an in depth look at what is easily, often too breezily labeled as 'interaction' between therapist and patient. This is nicely dovetailed by Worm whose article provides an in depth look at resistance analysis in body-oriented analytical psychotherapy.

The third part deals with treatment aspects in a group setting, with con-

tributions from R.Maaser, R.Heinzel and R.Ware. The articles in this section could be of interest to the reader because there is just so little literature on body psychotherapy in a group setting.

The fourth part looks at specific clinical application and specific disorders, with articles by D.Hoffmann-Axthelm, R.Ware, T.Reinert, M.Steiner-Fahrni and G.Downing. Hoffmann-Axthelm's article deserves particular mention because she elaborates on a set of treatment strategies that any bioenergetic therapist could easily integrate. George Downing may be familiar to US bioenergetic therapists since his original roots are in bioenergetic analysis and since he is a native English speaker with numerous publications in English. In this volume he writes about how to initiate therapy with difficult patients.

Last but not least, the fifth part looks to the future regarding a possible integration of analytical body psychotherapeutic concepts into postgraduate analytical training, by P.Geißler, G.Heisterkamp und T.Moser, and ends with a philosophical reflection by R.Kühn.

It was a smart move by the editors to focus on a mainly clinical and practical orientation for their reader; even the contributions attempting to break theoretical ground include clinical vignettes. This makes a voluminous (680 pages!), at times ponderous and repetitive book more readable and for extended stretches interesting. I certainly recommend it for those bioenergetic therapists in the German speaking world who want to familiarize themselves with recent developments in the psychoanalytic world close to their own professional home.

Review of *'Psychoanalyse der Lebensbewegungen': Zum körperlichen Geschehen in der psychoanalytischen Therapie – Ein Lehrbuch*; by Peter Geißler and Günter Heisterkamp (eds), 680 pages, Springer, Wien/New York, 2007

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