

# **The Handbook . . . Reflections By Halko Weiss**

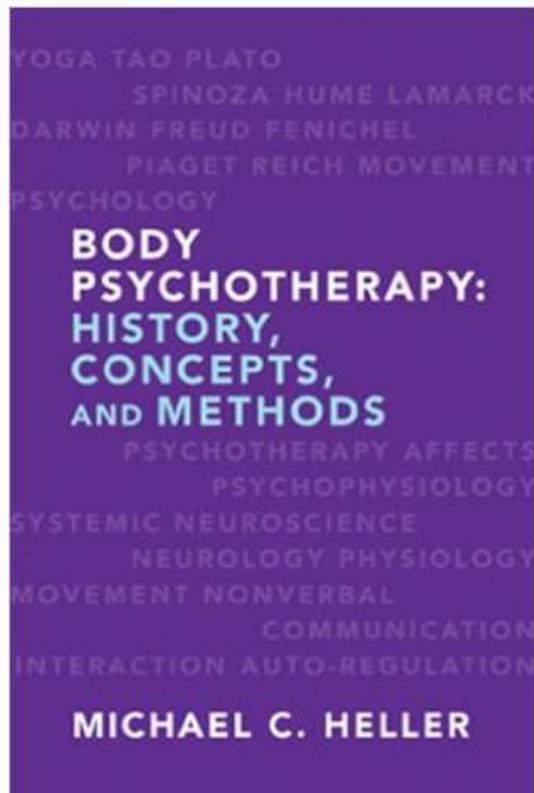


This book was composed by Gustl Marlock and myself to give a face to body psychotherapy as a whole. It is supposed to help mentally organize the scattered field and inform psychotherapists of all schools about its width and length, as well of its long history and its many methodologies. The idea is that this cannot be done by one author alone because nobody can correctly and fairly cover the contributions of so many diverse approaches. It is for this reason that the book contains the voices of 82 competent representatives of the field from many different countries, among them some of its most highly esteemed originators and teachers. They are meant to form the legs and arms, the trunk and the tail, the belly and the eyes of the now fully grown elephant named Body Psychotherapy.

The idea for the first version came in 2001 when Gustl and I sat together, very frustrated, because once again we had become aware of both a psychoanalytic conference, and a CBT conference on the role of the body in psychotherapy where none of us body psychotherapists were invited. Instead they often presented the most out-dated, primitive, and often misunderstood concepts of working with the body, often without naming where it came from, and with the claim it was a totally new and sensational approach.

Of course we were also aware that our field is so diverse, so cut-up by schools and concepts, that there IS no-one who can speak for the whole field. We saw the field as not able to present itself as a unified approach to psychotherapy. And we complained that nobody had tried to write the book on the whole of it. That is when we also became aware the WE had also not done so, and we made the decision to put together a simple little book with some articles within a year. Well, it lasted five years and was a hell of an effort!

Our hope is that body psychotherapy will be seen as a valid contributor to modern psychotherapy, and accepted as a partner in discourse who has a number of exciting offers, innovations, and controversial ideas to throw in the mix. In the long run we believe that the body can NOT rightfully, ethically, and intellectually excluded from the psychotherapy of the future. The mental/cognitive only approach will not



survive. But will our voice be heard? We want to try to help it.

Michel Heller's book, *Body Psychotherapy: History, Concepts, and Methods* is a wonderful example of how one man sees the field. We do not believe, however, that one man can capture the diversity, know all the different ways and angles, in the way that the people and schools described will feel that they are represented correctly. We wanted the field itself to speak, and we tried to be as impartial as we could possibly be.



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Three thousand copies in Germany is not like 3,000 copies in English. The English market may be 10 times as big as the German one. It is not only a fact that the population of the US is four times the size of the German, but it includes countries like England, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, etc. Plus all the people in other countries who have a different language but whose professional population does read in English: Sweden, Holland, etc., even Germany! Our German publisher said to me, literally, "You are now one of our success authors." Therefore, I disagree strongly that 3,000 copies in German is only mildly successful.

The book was strongly supported by the European Association for Body Psychotherapy, (EABP), as well as its German branch, the DGK, because it has political meaning to present body psychotherapy as a whole. My guess is that it will sell much better in the US than Michel's book, not just because it is more inclusive, but also because many schools have their authors in it and will help promote it.

It is not quite correct to say this book would be an effort to be "up to date". We have often asked the authors to NOT present their latest ideas, but to speak to what body psychotherapy has to offer in general, including the historic perspective. And to speak for ALL of us.

The book as served as a seminal book in Germany. Students at universities pick it up to read, to refer to when they consider the use of the body in psychotherapy. Since I feel that the body MUST be included in all forms of contemporary psychotherapy we hope to give a taste and a choice to those who are waking up to the question.

A professional who has no or little experience with working with the body can get inspirations and see what elements of the field they might be interested in. Students can pick up the book and look for

an aspect they are interested in without reading the whole book. It is organized around topics, not methods.

Body psychotherapists can check out what representatives of other schools are thinking and doing.

So if you are considering what use it may have for you, I would think it is most likely that you will read a chapter here and there, depending on what you are thinking about as a body psychotherapist at the moment. You can look up stuff. You can find out about schools and authors that you are curious about. You can use their references to continue with the research of an issue. The intro chapters by Gustl and myself are meant to weave it all together so that we hope to give people orientation in the field.

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### **A Labor of Love**

When it comes to Gustl's and my personal experience I must say it was a work of love. Although you can make a little bit of money with books in Germany, it will cover our costs in time, travel, etc., not even in the one-digit percentages. It is a very grinding experience to, for example, alienate authors who feel we do them injustice when they cannot write about a pet project, or deliver

30 pages instead of eight, or have a problem writing coherently and intelligently. Some of the articles have gone through more than 10 revisions, with both editors (and later, in the English version, sometimes three editors) going through a text, commenting, changing and then communicating about it, finding a common perspective and then work with the author. And then all the delays and forgotten deadlines!!!!!! Some of the authors were great: reliable, working well with feedback, cooperative, easy, friendly. Among them some of the greats, like Alexander Lowen. Others had great personal investments and were emotionally draining and time-consuming to work with. As editors we were

responsible not only for the text itself, but also for the kind of writing, staying with the topic, the size each topic gets within the larger whole, so that there is an appropriate balance, etc. That is not easy to accept for some authors. All in all, it was a tremendous effort that helped cut down our income, get stress at home, lose sleep, etc. But it also gave us great contacts with our peers all over the world. Personally, I learned more than in the years at college. We loved it.

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