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Tensions and Flows in the Life & Work of Judith S. Kestenberg

Theses of Doctoral Dissertation

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Abstract

The doctoral dissertation concerns a comprehensive historical and theoretical analysis of the life and work of Judith S. Kestenberg (1910-1999) with particular focus on the somatic orientation that permeates her oeuvre. Kestenberg's story is of a female inside/outsider, a Polish-Jewish emigree arriving to the New York Psychoanalytic circles at the outbreak of World War II. A nonconformist, innovative albeit eclectic thinker who gravitated towards the unknown and unspoken, the somatic precursors of psychic development and the kinaesthetic imprints of transgenerational trauma. These seemingly dissimilar topics of interest could signify a dislocation in Kestenberg's oeuvre however on closer look a somatic thread becomes conspicuous. Although Kestenberg's contribution to the psychoanalytic understanding on movement behaviour was substantial, it remained largely unreflected. There hasn't been a historical study conducted to trace the evolution of her concepts or the significance of the human body and movement within the context of her professional and personal history. This study intends to fill this gap and integrate the work of a female, Eastern-European emigre psychiatrist's work into the historical recollection of American psychoanalysis.

Through the study of Kestenberg's work, the study explores issues of professional belonging, rejection of the body within psychoanalysis and the changing attitudes towards transdisciplinarity in American psy-sciences from the mid to late 20th century. A comprehensive historical survey of Kestenberg's oeuvre contributes to our understanding of the post-war discourses in American psy-sciences within which the study of bodily movement became central to the pursuit of the democratic project.

Sources of the study are documents consulted at private estates of Kestenberg's family and former colleagues in the USA and across various medical archives across New York City. The conclusion of the project was the recent inauguration of Judith S. Kestenberg papers at the Psychoanalytic Collection of the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress, USA.

Keywords: women pioneer, movement studies, history of psy-sciences, kinetic project

Introduction

On February 23, 1971, at the 565th meeting of the New York Psychoanalytic Society, Judith S. Kestenberg presented, for the first time, her psychodynamic theory of movement, "Development of the Child through bodily Movement I." At the symposium, Margaret Mahler (1971) stated that "*Dr. Kestenberg's research has placed psychoanalytic observation in a truly new key*" (p. 1) and predicted that Kestenberg's "*alphabet and grammar will be learned*" and "*her interpretations of the kind of body language [...] will become a source for enriched understanding of psychoanalytic theory and practice*" (p. 15) (New York Psychoanalytic Association and Society Meeting Notes, A. A. Brill Library, Archives and Special Collections, 565th meeting proceeding 1971).

Mahler's forecast of the wider dissemination of the Kestenberg Movement Profile proved to be overly hopeful in light of the fact that Kestenberg's theories of movement behaviour and her method of movement analysis remained almost entirely unreflected within psychoanalysis. Kestenberg chose a new research direction in 1974. Together with her husband, Milton Kestenberg and several mental health professionals, founded a research group for the '*Psychoanalytic Study of the effects of the Holocaust of Second Generation*'. Then in 1981 they launched the '*Jerome Riker International Study of Organised Persecution of Children*' which became one of the largest international research projects on the Holocaust. Through her psychohistorical studies on the transgenerational effects of Holocaust trauma, Kestenberg's name became known within psychoanalytic circles.

Kestenberg's work received a selective reception within American psy-sciences, namely psychoanalysis, psychiatry and dance-movement therapy. Disciplinary alliances and ambitions of the time lead to the fragmentation of her oeuvre along the lines of her two main projects. Her movement studies became influential in the emergent field of dance-movement therapy in the middle of the twentieth century in the USA. Her Movement Profile has been further developed by dance-movement therapists and forms an integral part of professional training still today.

I first encountered Kestenberg's work during my dance-movement therapy graduate training. Coming from a contemporary dance and social work background with ample interest in the application of movement research and choreographic exploration to psycho-social support, I was, at first, curious to know what psychology wanted from dance; how it viewed the moving body and how it conceptualised bodily movement. Learning about the Kestenberg Movement Profile filled me with intrigue as it seemed to provide a theoretically well

anchored view on the developmental aspects of movement behaviour. However, I was sceptical of the systemic and structuralist orientation embedded within it which seemed to be in slight conflict with the more dynamic and phenomenological approach of how it was presented to us during our graduate program. I found Kestenberg's approach to movement, that is, the perspective to search for the intention thus the mind in and of bodily movement, tremendously enlightening. I went onto complete the certification training in the method under the supervision of Kestenberg's former colleagues and students. Since then, the theoretical and practical knowledge of this framework not only enriched my clinical practice as a dance-movement therapist by guiding my interventions and improving my therapeutic skills but also made me adopt a metapsychological approach to thinking (within and) about the moving body. I came to be involved in the academic teaching of the Kestenberg Movement Profile at two accredited European graduate programs where the learning and interrogating the psychodynamic and conceptual underpinnings of the method are given equal emphasis. It is my opinion that Kestenberg's theory and method of movement analysis can be a sensitive, rich and detailed approach to the depth-psychology of bodily movement; it provides a unique view on embodiment which expands its relevance to artistic practice as well as to philosophical and cultural studies. However, it is equally important to understand its conceptual underpinnings, intellectual and historical context.

I delved deeper into the history and theoretical origins of the system through publications of Kestenberg which opened-up a world of further depth and detail as well as unknowns and tension. The attention and effort it took to receive the richness of her texts resulting from the difficulty of transcribing embodied experience in written language only lured me in further. I could sense the endurance Kestenberg must have applied to her quest. I was inspired by the distance she attempted to bridge over as a psychiatrist, with sporadic experiences of dance in her childhood, to create, speak and bring attention to the language of the moving body. The way she searched for the thinking body and the mind of movement, seemed to be a remarkably unique focus and an extraordinary undertaking within her field at the time. The lack of psychoanalytic reflections on her movement studies and the difference I encountered between her original texts and the reinterpretation of her work by dance-movement therapists outlined a space for questions. Later, I stumbled upon her transgenerational trauma studies. The apparent dislocation of her interest from movement analysis to the study of the Holocaust as well as the seeming selective reception of her oeuvre in psychoanalysis and dance-movement therapy demarcated a field for my doctoral research.

I hypothesised that Kestenberg's selective reception was owed to trends within psy-sciences at the time, thus I chose a history of science orientation for the dissertation.

Research Objectives & Methodology

The dissertation concerns a theoretical and historical analysis of the life and work of Judith S. Kestenberg (1910-1999) with particular focus on the somatic orientation that permeates her oeuvre. Through a theoretical analysis, the research traces the emergence of Kestenberg's psychodynamic theory of movement development. Through the lens of the history of American psy-sciences and movement behaviour research, the research contextualises Kestenberg's work within the scientific milieu it emerged from. The research sets out to investigate the reasons for the selective reception of her movement studies within American psychoanalysis and dance/movement therapy. This inquiry into the history and development of Kestenberg's concepts attempts to establish a more unified view of her lifework re-inserting it into the historical narrative of American psychoanalysis and psy-sciences from the mid to late 20th century.

The analytic framework of the research rests upon the following pillars: personal and gender history, 20th century history of American psychoanalysis and psy-sciences and cultural analysis of the study of movement behaviour in 20th century modernity in the USA. From a methodological viewpoint the project follows the descriptive tradition of history of psychology as it relies on a wide array of archival material and personal recollections on Kestenberg's work. Characteristic of the history of science approach to the history of psychology is the view of disciplinary history as the object of social history. Concordantly with this principle the research illuminates the relationship between the three vectors of history of psychology – ideas, individuals and society that is, between Kestenberg, the societal context within which she lived and the socio-cultural-conceptual context from which her ideas emerged by contextualising her developmental movement studies within the Cold War history of American psy-sciences, psychoanalysis and movement behaviour research (Kiss, 2019; Pleh et al. 2019).

The principal orientation of the study is historical, where history is applied at different registers. The versatility of Kestenberg's interests; her unique choice of research topics and the voluminous publication history she left behind contrasting the absence of her legacy from the history of American psychoanalysis reasons the study of her oeuvre. In this sense history is used as a goal; uncovering the narrative of her career is the argument itself. History as a

goal also appears in the biographical angle of the research. The winding roads that Kestenbergs life took; from Poland to Vienna and to New York; from a wealthy orthodox Jewish family background to forced emigration and financial hardship at the outbreak of the Second World War; from receiving religious education at home as a girl to studying neurology and psychoanalysis; from her childhood fondness of gymnastic to movement studies; from the loss of her parents to Holocaust studies call for a synthesis. Life-history of early 20th century women psychoanalysts sensitively shows the specific obstacles and possibilities inherent in the shifting socio-cultural norms characteristic of the period; namely expanding professional possibilities for women, professionalisation of psychoanalysis as well as the influence of gender norms on the roles women could take in the psychoanalytic movement, adversities arising from changing languages and cultural identities through forced emigration, ethnic and gender discrimination (Naszkowska, 2023). Kestenbergs life-history poignantly reflects the specific challenges Eastern-European, Jewish women in psy-sciences faced such as loss of their home and family, struggles of integrating into a new professional and cultural context, language barriers and financial hardship. Her life also demonstrates the potential of the inside-outsider position, that is, similarly to many early women psychoanalysts, gravitating towards unexplored or neglected topics thus bringing new perspectives to a largely male dominated conceptual sphere of psychoanalysis (Borgos, 2018, 2019).

On another register, history is applied as a tool to the study of Kestenbergs oeuvre to dispel the assumption that historical recollection reflects the significance and the weight of its object. Through the analysis of her work, I highlight its potential significance and through a reception study I examine the processes (disciplinary ambitions, conceptual and methodological alliances) that contributed to the neglect of her movement studies which in turn provides an example of the mechanism that led to theories and theorists becoming overlooked or dismissed by their scientific fields in their time. Within this register I inquire how Kestenbergs navigated contemporaneous disciplinary trends, how she anchored her theories and disseminated her practices. The reception study employs history also as a laboratory to test the apparent concern of psychoanalysis for the role of the bodily in psychic life. Furthermore, history is applied as a tool to demonstrate the links between 20th century modernity in the West, Cold War anxieties and the study of movement behaviour in the history of American psy-sciences through the somatic orientation inherent in Kestenbergs lifework. Touching upon tentative conceptual continuities between Kestenbergsian notions on

somatic processes provide a historical background to current embodied concepts within psy-sciences.

Research questions

The main questions of this research are:

- What intellectual milieu did Kestenberg's theory of movement development and method of movement analysis emerge from and what were the main conceptual and historical influences on Kestenberg's thinking?
- Which shifts in theorising, methodology and scientific orientation in mid-century American psychoanalysis contributed to the selective reception of Kestenberg's work that led to the neglect of her developmental movement studies? Respectively, how would an integrative view of Kestenberg's oeuvre contribute to the understanding of the post-war history of American psychoanalysis and psychotherapies?
- Subsequently, what processes led to the close alliance between the emerging field of American dance/movement therapy and the Kestenberg Movement Profile? What do graduate students of dance/movement therapy trained in the Kestenberg Movement Profile think of its current relevance and application in dance/movement therapy?
- Where can we position Kestenberg's movement focused work within the history of movement behaviour research in the USA?
- How does a synthetic view of Kestenberg's life and work contribute to our understanding of the development of her ideas? Particularly, what are the aspects of personal life and circumstances that influenced her professional choices?

Data Sources, Collection & Analysis

Main sources of data during this research were predominantly archival documents of Judith S. Kestenberg's life and work, secondary sources in the history of American psy-sciences and movement behaviour research, as well as expert interviews and graduate students in the field of dance-movement therapy and movement behaviour research.

Primary sources included Kestenberg's training documents, professional and personal correspondence, published and unpublished scholarly work including her clinical and academic appointments and autobiographical paper. The following collections and archives

were consulted: University of Vienna Archive, A. A. Brill Library & Archive of the New York Psychoanalytic Society, Berta Bornstein, Edith Jacobson, and Marianne Kris' papers at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, USA; Paul Schilder papers at the Brooklyn College Library; Margaret Mahler's papers at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Yale University; Anna Freud's papers at the Freud Museum, UK; Martha Davis and Irmgard Bartenieff Collection at the Clarice Smith Library for Performing Arts of University of Maryland; Oskar Diethelm Psychiatric Library of the Weill-Cornell Hospital; Archives of the Mount Sinai Hospital; Archives of the New York Academy of Medicine; and private collections of Kestenberg's family and former colleagues, namely Janet Kestenberg Amighi, Helene Bass-Wichelhaus, Mark Sossin and Susan Loman. The conclusion of the archival research part of this study was the compilation and inauguration of the Judith S. Kestenberg papers at the Psychoanalytic Collection of the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress, USA in January 2024. The archival research was made possible with the support of the Hungarian Fulbright Foundation.

During the theoretical analysis of secondary sources, I attended to publications of Kestenberg and publications of others concerning her work. Secondary sources for the historical analysis included publications of the Institute for Non-verbal Communication Research, the Kinesis Report and psychoanalytic journals, Whitney Laemmler's (2016) study on Rudolf von Laban's dance notation technology, Lucia Ruprecht's (2019) work on gesturalism in the 20th century, Martha Davis' (1972, 1982, 2001) works on the history of movement behaviour research, Bican Polat's (2021) analysis on the history of mental hygiene movement and child guidance, Nathan G. Hale's (1995) survey on the history of American psychoanalysis, Gerald N. Grobb's (1991) study on mental health policy in modern America, Deborah Weinstein's (2013) research on the emergence of family therapy, Alrene Stein's (2009) study on the construction of second-generation Holocaust survivor identities in the United States, Harriett Pass Freidenreich's (2002) and Klara Naszkowska's (2023) social history studies on European, Jewish women in academia.

Outcomes of the theoretical and historical analysis are supported by recollections from Kestenberg's life-long collaborators and experts in the field of movement behaviour research highlighting the significance of Kestenberg's work and illuminating the connections between her personal and professional life. Opinion of graduate students of dance/movement therapy provide illustrative data on the current relevance and applicability of Kestenberg's movement-based assessment framework. Additionally, expert opinion of Hungarian psychoanalysts and psychodynamic dance and movement therapists was sought.

The focus group interviews involved an international group of graduate students of dance/movement therapy trained in the Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP). Data from the focus group interviews was thematically analysed with a deductive orientation (Birtalan, 2023). The analysis pertained to identifying the main themes emergent in students' opinions regarding the relevance and applicability of the Kestenberg Movement Profile in dance-movement therapy practice. Considering the opinion of graduate students as a data source for this research rests upon the assumption that the current and further potential of an assessment framework of a discipline could be well illustrated through the attitude of the next generation of practitioners towards it. The opinion of graduate students is by no means representative of the whole potential and relevance of the framework, however alongside the array of publications on contemporary research and clinical applications of the KMP, it may sufficiently outline the state-of-the-art.

Dissertation Structure

Chapter two is an overview of Judith Silberpfennig Kestenberg's life from her childhood in Poland to her final home in New York, USA. I discuss the circumstances of Kestenberg's upbringing, education, emigration, marriage and professional development. I intend to draw up the outline of her career and briefly present the significance of her legacy to set the scene for these to be explored in detail in the later chapters.

Chapter three is concerned with the theoretical and historical analysis of Kestenberg's work with particular focus on her developmental movement studies. Her interest lied in uncovering the relationship between personality development and movement behaviour. The focus of this chapter is Kestenberg's (psychiatrist and psychoanalyst) psychodynamic theory of movement development and method of movement analysis, the KMP. In the first part of the chapter, concepts on bodily movement within psychoanalytic thought will be discussed, narrowing in on systemic psychoanalytic studies of movement behaviour. In the central section of the chapter, I provide a theoretical analysis of Kestenberg's developmental approach highlighting dominant schools of thought and professionals who influenced her conceptualisations. Then her most important publications will be chronologically surveyed as an attempt to trace the evolution of her ideas. Lastly, the metapsychological framework of the KMP will be discussed inclusive of the conceptual and methodological currents embedded within it. Particularly noteworthy here are Mahler's developmental theory, the psychology of the self, Anna Freud's diagnostic profile and the influence of the independents of the British

psychoanalytic school, specifically Winnicott. In the last part of the chapter I take an outlook onto the last major project of Kestenberg, her studies on the transgenerational trauma of the Holocaust with particular focus on the relationship between the earlier epoch of her work, the movement studies and the last epoch, her trauma studies.

Chapter four presents the difference in reception of Kestenberg's developmental movement studies within psychoanalysis and dance/movement therapy in comparison to her Holocaust studies in a concise format.

Chapter five is concerned with the contextualisation of Kestenberg's developmental movement studies within the mid to late 20th century trends in American psy-sciences and in movement behaviour research. In order to understand the relevance and reception of Kestenberg's work an examination of its alliances and inconsistencies with the contemporaneous trends in psy-sciences is essential. Through this historical analysis, I'm looking for the factors that contributed to the neglect of her movement-focused work in psychoanalysis contrasting the appreciation it received within affiliated fields, particularly in dance/movement-therapy. In doing so, I review the emergence of child guidance and developmental studies in the USA and in Britain from the turn of the century. I'm going to present a concise and focused history of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychiatry in the United States with specific attention on the changing trends in theorising and methodology in psychoanalysis in the 1950s and the 1970s. Then I discuss the changing trends within American psychiatry of the mid 1960s, such as the disintegration of statutory mental health and the evolution of community-based psychiatry, the subsequent emergence of child guidance clinics, family therapy and action-focused psychotherapies. The selective and fragmented reception of her legacy exposes the ambiguous position of the human body and its expressions within psychoanalytic theory and reveals the views on disciplinary boundaries in late 20th century discourse of American psy-sciences. In the later part of the chapter the scope of analysis is expanded onto the kinetic project of modernity highlighting the intimate relationship between the study of movement behaviour and socio-cultural processes of 20th century modernity in the West.

Chapter six attempts the integration of Kestenberg's life and work as a whole highlighting the continuities and dislocation across her oeuvre; identifying inner threads of interest throughout the course of her life.

Findings of the Research

The Life of Judith S. Kestenberg

According to Friedenreich's (2002) study on the history of Jewish university educated women of the early twentieth century Judith Kestenberg belongs to the younger cohort of 'New Women' who were born between 1900 and 1916 and received their higher education during the interwar years. According to Naszkowska's (2023, p. 200) studies on social and personal histories of early Jewish women psychoanalysts, Judith's case was somewhat atypical. Her family was an observant, Orthodox family which was in contrast with most early Jewish women psychoanalysts whose families were more often non-observant. Another difference in Judith's upbringing was the strong intellectual interest of her mother and her support for her female children to pursue university education (op.cit.), however her parents were unhappy with her choice of medical study as they found it inappropriate for a female to be looking at male corpses during her training (Naszkowska, 2023, p. 201). In most other studied life histories of early Jewish psychoanalysts, their mothers were either not supportive of their university education or indifferent to it due to their identification as a housewife (Naszkowska, 2023). More often their fathers were role models for them to pursue further education. The financial instability of Kestenberg's family in the 1920s influenced her choice of profession as she wanted to be able to sustain herself and support her family (Kestenberg, 1992, p. 165). Kestenberg seemed to have fulfilled her mother's dream of becoming a highly educated woman, however she also stepped out of parental prescript when she chose to study medicine (Naszkowska, 2023). Based on Kestenberg's recollections (1992) her mother was psychologically inclined, and her father was a person for the community; she seemed to continue and embody both features in her lifework by becoming a psychiatrist, child development researcher and setting up a community centre and advocating for the Jewish community. She (Kestenberg, 1992) also mentioned that she wanted to heal her own family and perhaps her own neurotic inclinations by studying psychiatry.

The Work of Judith S. Kestenberg

Kestenberg investigated the interaction between movement and personality development. Her movement profile incorporates a psychodynamic theoretical approach to movement development, the grouping principles necessary for its analysis, findings on the organisation and syntax of movement behaviour, and the recording and visualisation method for data recording. The main period of the development of the Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP) is the period from 1940 to the mid-1970s, and its professional context is the New York Psychoanalytic Association. The themes, theoretical issues and new trends in psychoanalytic professional discourse that emerged in this period can be traced back to the influence of Kestenberg's thinking.

The theoretical analysis of the evolution of Kestenberg's concepts revealed that her main conceptual influences were Paul Schilder's work on body image formation, Mahler's and Erikson's developmental ego-psychology, Hartmann, Loewenstein and Kris' ego-psychology, Anna Freud's diagnostic profile and Winnicott's object relations perspective. Her work echoed the mid-century drive towards gathering empirical evidence to underscore psychoanalytic development concepts through direct infant observation. Inherent key concepts of Kestenberg's developmental framework were the epigenetic view of development and the presumed continuity between id and ego. The epigenetic perspective is reflected in her proposed cumulative sequence of movement patterns within distinct categories. Developmental process from id to ego imply that a child, through somatic interactions with their environment, acquires the ability to delay instinctual urges, manage disturbances, and adapt the environment to their needs thus delineating progression from affective sensorimotor patterns and early defensive patterns and executive functions.

Key notions of her psychodynamic theory of movement were Tension-Flow attunement, Shape-Flow adjustment, and the principle of affinity indicating intra- or interpersonal harmony or conflict. This principle implied a grammatical organisation to movement behaviour proposing that clashes between affective Tension-Flow patterns and object-related Shape-Flow patterns signify intrapersonal conflicts. Similarly, interpersonal clashes between mother and infant, indicated by Tension-Flow or Shape-Flow patterns, were viewed as critical in preventing developmental trauma. Kestenberg contended that congenital preferences for drive discharge and organisation, ego attitudes and functions, self and other schemas, intra- and interpersonal conflicts could be assessed and represented in Movement Profiles. Resolution of these conflicts may occur through movement retraining and

creative-arts based interventions applied to in parent-infant psychotherapy, family support and child guidance (Kestenberg, 1965a, 1965b, 1967; Kestenberg et al. 1971).

Kestenberg chose a new research direction in 1974 and together with her husband, Milton Kestenberg, embarked on one of the largest international Holocaust studies under the title 'Jerome Riker International Study of Organised Persecution of Children' and founded the research group 'Psychoanalytic Study of the effects of the Holocaust of Second Generation'. The psychoanalytic study of the transgenerational effects of the Holocaust trauma was at the heart of Kestenberg's later work, which was well received by the psychoanalytic profession and through which Kestenberg's name became known. Kestenberg's efforts to carve out space for narratives of the second-generation and attempts to build communities for Holocaust survivors echoed to the growing Holocaust awareness in the 1980s and largely contributed to the construction of second-generation identities in the United States (Stein, 2009).

Kestenberg's oeuvre encompasses various internal tensions due to her oscillation between progressive and more conservative stances. Placing bodily movement into the centre of psychoanalytic metapsychology in the 1950s was a pioneering effort. Kestenberg initiated the exploration of the intrinsic unity between soma and psyche and explored correlations between anatomic, hormonal and psychic organisations thus proposing a non-Cartesian approach to the mind in psychoanalysis (Kestenberg, 1975, p. xxi). Her focus on internal bodily sensations through which she reconsidered notions of activity and passivity expanded libidinal theory onto internal organs. Her contention to hold drive and ego psychology to equal significance in analysis thus contributing to a more holistic view, demonstrated a reformist attitude. She attended to lesser discussed topics such as foetal movement development and proposed to view parenthood as a developmental stage. She demonstrated willingness to transcend disciplinary boundaries by integrating psychoanalytic developmental theory with dance studies, drawing inspiration from Eastern medicine's meridian systems, and advocating for the incorporation of creative arts in therapy and child guidance. Her Holocaust studies were unique for their original scope and methodology; her somatically focused narrative interviewing technique and for extending to marginalised survivor groups such as the second-generation, child survivors and war children (Kestenberg & Khan, 1989).

Her traditionalist tendency is represented in her adherence to Freudian drive theory. Even though Kestenberg attempted to reconcile with emerging object-relations theory through her concept of '*transsensus outgoingness*' (Kestenberg, 1978), this remained an underdeveloped aspect of her work. While Kestenberg introduced the notion of the inner-genital developmental phase, her perspectives on the formation of sex-specific

identities, particularly femininity, remained entrenched in classical Freudian phallo-centrism. She endorsed traditional, gender stereotypical parental roles. She developed typologies of women based on their motherly attitudes, viewed career-focused women as masculine, raised concerns about social trends delaying parenthood and viewed the nuclear family as a normative social unit (Kestenberg, 1980a, 1980b, 1989, 1990). Kestenberg applied the positivist orientation of American ego-psychology in her approach to bodily movement. She anatomised movement behaviour into well-defined categories and elements, proposed a syntactic structure to movement comparable to symbolic language. A Cartesian dualistic approach to the mind links thinking to language and its assertion is that there is no thinking outside of language (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011). Even though Kestenberg was interested in the thinking body the way she conceptualised this thinking was in terms of language which essentially undermined the notion of a non-dualist, dynamic body-mind simultaneously inherent in her theory.

Issues of Belonging

Kestenberg attempted to operationalise the developmental study and analysis of movement within psychoanalysis. Historical analysis of American psychoanalysis revealed that Kestenberg's ambition to create a systemic framework for developmental assessment connected her work to the main trends of psychoanalytic psychiatry in the 1950s when direct infant observation and the collection of normative developmental data was viewed as the fertile new ground of psychoanalysis. This new orientation held the promise of building empirical evidence for psychoanalytic developmental concepts thus supporting the relevance of psychoanalysis amongst proliferating psy-sciences in the mid-century in the USA. Despite following the main ambitions of the discipline, Kestenberg also opposed central tenets of American ego-psychology, neglected changing tides between drive theory and object-relations perspectives and readily transgressed disciplinary boundaries between (dance) art and science.

When other psychoanalysts were increasingly rejecting Freudian drive theory, Kestenberg was developing and deepening them (Sossin, interview, 2022). She consciously positioned her approach on the border between instinct theory and ego psychology (Kestenberg, 1975a). Her concept of transsensus outgoingness held the promise of connecting her work to popular trends of the emerging self and modern object-relations theory in psychoanalytic thought in the 1970s however this aspect of her work remained under-developed compared to her emphasis on drive theory. Kestenberg conceived of the

psychodynamic grammar of movement behaviour. In her view, psychic materia behind the symptom is revealed by the patient's movement narrative, the specific constellation of kinetic features within one's individual movement repertoire. The focus and the depth of Kestenbergs study on movement behaviour was unusual and its vocabulary mostly unknown to psychoanalysts and psychiatrists.

Kestenbergs, influenced by dance studies, shifted psychoanalytic attention onto kinaesthetic sensing and attunement through which one embodies the movement patterns of the patient thus constructing understanding of their self-experience. Generative collaborations between artistic and scientific approaches were a gradually growing tendency in psy-sciences in the USA from the early 1980s onwards (Levy, 1988; Karkou & Sanderson, 2006, pp. 13-21) demonstrated by the fields of creative-arts therapies and arts-based research; but the reciprocity between art and science was viewed as potentially detrimental to the stability of scientific knowledge in American psychoanalysis and psychiatry in the 1950s.

It also becomes clear that hesitation of psychoanalysts regarding Kestenbergs work cannot only be attributed to the somewhat uneasy integration of psychoanalytic metapsychology with the phenomenological language or to the primacy of somatic experience in her approach. There seems to be a confusion of tongues palpable in her work which created a distinct tension between her diagrammatic orientation, systematising drive and the exploratory, embodied language borrowed from dance studies. A dynamic integration of the language and epistemic orientations of dance and psychoanalysis wasn't successfully made and divided Kestenbergs audience into two groups; psychoanalysts who took some interest in her developmental assessment but were also kept at a distance by the language, and dance-movement therapists who understood the Labanian terminology but rejected the strong Freudian foundation of her theory.

The case study of Kestenbergs life and work demonstrates the centrality of infant observation and developmental assessment to the pursuit of legitimisation of psychoanalytic developmental concepts in the changing landscape of American psy-sciences in the middle of the century. Even though she forged generative collaborations between artistic and scientific approaches; this confluence of art and science was viewed as detrimental to the stability of scientific knowledge in American psychoanalysis and psychiatry in the 1950s (Grob, 1991; Polat, 2021). Her oeuvre markedly incorporated the shift towards community-based settings and prophylactic approaches of the 1960s in American psychiatry. Kestenbergs interest in the study of movement behaviour situates her work as part of the 'Movement Movement' in the humanities (Kormos, 2023).

Expanding the scope of analysis onto the history of movement behaviour research in the humanities throughout the 20th century in the USA the kinetic project of modernity becomes outlined. Studies on bodily movement and nonverbal communication came to be central to the post-war understanding about the association of upbringing, mental health, national security, and the democratic project during the Cold War in the USA (Weinstein, 2013). Linking psychological health with productive citizenry and democratic society was characteristic of various social movements during the 20th century from mind-cure and child-guidance movements, wartime orphanages to mid-century heightened attention on mother-child relationship and to the later development of family therapy and dance-movement therapy in the USA. In the socio-political milieu saturated with Cold War anxieties about the stability of democracy in the face of totalitarian regimes, democracy and mental health became increasingly linked. Within this discourse the body becomes a repository of trauma, repressed aggression, social prejudice, adverse childhood experiences that exert influence on personality formation and social views thus on democratic citizenship (op.cit.). Prevention of delinquency, social discrimination and prejudice became a psychological enterprise with particular focus on adverse childhood experiences and pathological family dynamics. This new orientation towards dynamics and interactive processes brought action and behaviour into the centre replacing previous attention on verbal language as in client's self-reports and therapeutic interpretations. An optic orientation, naturalistic observation methods prevailed with the frequent use of video recording and one-way mirrors. Psychopathology was no longer linked to pathogenic agents rather understood because of traumatic, compromised relationship of self-and-other, or maladjustment of the individual to their environment (op.cit.). In the post-war intellectual arena, bodily movement came to be viewed as an indicator of disturbed personal or social dynamics; its observation, assessment and interpretation promised the potential psycho-technological mitigation of social issues. This was exemplified in the various microanalytic methods of movement analysis developed in the 1960s in the USA.

The concepts of body and identity are central to Kestenberg's oeuvre as the first focus of her work was to develop a psychoanalytic personality assessment based on bodily movement thus her movement studies can be considered an integral part of the transdisciplinary surge of interest in the study movement behaviour and echo main tenets of the Cold War discourse on bodily movement in psy-sciences in the USA (Davis, 1982). Kestenberg viewed the body as a messenger and movement as a language that speaks about the interiors of the individual psyche. For her the body was a repository of developmental and

psychological aspects of an individual and bodily movement expressed congenital traits, acquired experience, and learned behaviours. In her later work, she argued that Holocaust trauma could be identified transgenerationally in the bodily movements of survivors. She asserted that repressed aggression and hatred that lead to racial prejudice are also stored in the body and indicated in movement behaviour. For Kestenberg societal and personal well-being were dependent on methods of movement observation, controlled expression of aggression through somatic awareness and therapeutic movement. Thus her concepts on the meaning of movement and its significance for individual and societal development were intimately tied to the ethos of the democratic project in the post-war period in the United States (Weinstein, 2013; Laemmli, 2016).

Continuities in Concepts

There are various palpable echoes between contemporary infant-mental health research and Kestenberg's developmental movement theory and ideas on intersubjectivity. Her notion of kinaesthetic attunement through tension and Shape-Flow and their significance in the development of self-and-other schemas seem to be consonant with concepts of marked affect mirroring (Fonagy et al. 2002, 2012; Gergely, 2004, 2007; Gergely & Unoka, 2008; Gergely & Watson, 1996), synrhythmicity (Trevarthen & Malloch, 2009), vitality affects and interaffectivity (Stern, 1971, 1998/1985). Application of the Kestenberg Movement Profile to child guidance and parent-infant psychotherapy at the Centre of Parents and Children with its emphasis on embodied interventions correspond to contemporary approaches in mentalisation-based treatments and embodied considerations in analytic therapy and parent-infant psychotherapy (Knoblauch, 1997, 2005, 2017; Bucci, 1997). Kestenberg's emphasis on kinaesthetic attunement, particularly through tension and Shape-Flow dynamics, resonates with concepts such as affect mirroring, vitality affects, and interaffectivity found in current literature within psy-sciences. Researchers like Fonagy et al. (2002, 2012), Gergely (2004, 2007), Gergely & Unoka (2008), and Gergely & Watson (1996) have extensively explored affect mirroring as a crucial component in early socio-emotional development. Similarly, the notion of synrhythmicity, as discussed by Trevarthen & Malloch (2000), aligns with Kestenberg's emphasis on the rhythmic coordination between infant and caregiver during interaction. Kestenberg's concepts of vitality affects and interaffectivity find resonance in the work of Stern (1971, 1998/1985), who has examined the intricate interplay of affective states and their impact on early relational experiences. These connections suggest that Kestenberg's work on somatic mechanisms underlying early developmental processes could

be considered a historical background to contemporary concepts of infant-mental health and mentalization studies.

Continuities in Life

Kestenberg developed her professional identity after her emigration to the United States at the outbreak of the Second World War. As an alien in a new environment where her identity, personal and professional connections were fragmented by cultural differences, she searched for a medium that transfers meaning across these divisions; this was bodily movement. The first epoch of her work absorbed in developmental movement studies could be viewed as an attempt to integrate herself in her new professional context in American psychoanalysis and psychiatry with invoking important aspects of her personal history, the love for dance and children. This era in her career was marked by the tension of losing her parents that initiated a period of latency denoting the presence of integrative processes on an unconscious level. The next epoch of her career centred around the study of the transgenerational effects of the Holocaust. These studies which could be understood as further attempts to integrate various losses she suffered; loss of her parents, loss of her home in Vienna and Poland and the concomitant aspects of her Polish-Jewish identity.

If we consider that Freud's work changed the paradigm of medical investigation from looking and imaging to listening (Csabai & Eros, 2000, pp. 80-82), then Kestenberg further shifted it towards kinaesthetic attunement through which one embodies the movement patterns of the patient thus constructing understanding of their self-experience. Freud developed the anatomy of narrative in his psychoanalytic technique; Kestenberg conceived of the psychodynamic grammar of movement behaviour. In the Freudian view the psychic materia behind the symptom is revealed by the patient's narrative (Csabai & Eros, 2000); for Kestenberg it is revealed by the movement narrative, the specific constellation of kinetic features within one's individual movement repertoire.

The dissertation, by looking at Kestenberg's work from a historical perspective, contributed to our understanding about the history of psy-sciences from the mid to late 20th century and clarified the links between studies on movement behaviour and the pursuit of the democratic project in the Cold War period in the USA. With the growing professionalisation and global dissemination of creative therapies, coupled with the advancement of the embodiment paradigm, there has been a notable surge in scientific interest in movement processes within the psychological sciences. This presents an auspicious opportunity to

incorporate an integrated perspective of Judith S. Kestenberg's work into the historical narrative of American psy-sciences. It has been the ambition of this research to augment this process by establishing a stand-alone archival collection of Kestenberg at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress where her voluminous lifework is now accessible to the public.

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