

# Books Reviews

## Body memory, metaphor and movement



**Edited by Sabine C. Koch, Thomas Fuchs, Michaela Summa & Cornelia Müller**

**John Benjamins Publishing Company  
(Advances in Consciousness Research, Series 84). Amsterdam: 2012**

This 452 page volume was published by the John Benjamins Publishing Company in 2012 in hardcover and is now available in paperback and e-book. It is the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration of phenomenologists, cognitive linguists, and clinicians working on embodiment research. They all faced questions about the meaning of the concept of body memory: Can body memory be empirically measured and tested? When and how does body memory become explicit? Do symbols and metaphor play a role in this process? Can practitioners of body and movement therapies access body memories in order to effectively treat individuals in therapy?

The book is divided into four parts, dealing with phenomenological aspects in the first and contributions from cognitive science in the second part. The third section looks at clinical implications of body memory, followed by a

fourth section of conclusions, offering an integration of the different sections.

In the first section Thomas Fuchs provides an overview of body memory from a phenomenological perspective and extends his body memory taxonomy from 2003 (procedural, situational, intercorporeal, incorporative and traumatic memory) to a six type model, now including pain memory. Michaela Summa discusses the relevance of inquiry into body memory, touching upon the role of body memory in meaning formation by comparing Husserl's theory with embodied concepts developed by Lakoff and Johnson. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone looks at her description of kinaesthetic memory within the current debate on memory in philosophy. Eugene Gendlin stresses that the inquiry of implicit memory should not be exclusively focused on the past, embracing an analysis of our capacity to presently reshape the past and to create something new. Elizabeth Behnke introduces the concept of "enduring" to describe a particular attitude characterizing traumatic memory. Lastly, Monica Alacorn explores the relation between body memory and dance.

The second part integrates contributions from cognitive science. The first four chapters are based on a cognitive sciences background from psychology and provide an overview of recent empirical embodiment literature: Petra Jansen proposes new insights into different measurements of body memory analogous to those of "classical" memory research. Christina Bermeitinger and Markus Kiefer attempt an integration of embodied and classical views on conceptual representation. Christina Jung and Peggy Sparenberg focus on the effects of embodiment on emotions and the connections to the human mirror neuron system. Caterina Suitner et al show the situated nature of memory and provide evidence for its dynamic character. Sabine Koch tests and validates Fuchs's five type body memory model on the basis of a qualitative empirical test. The next four chapters include the perspectives of cognitive linguistics, cognitive anthropology and other fields: Claudia Böger discusses the importance of metaphorical instructions during movement learning. Astrid Kolter et al present an empirical documentation of body memory and the transition from implicit

to explicit memory from the different perspectives, and discuss its clinical implications. William Sax and Karin Polit review the history of body memory from an anthropological perspective, and include two case studies. Ralf Meyer links body memory and neurobiology, arguing that body memory in the neurobiological context may be hypothesized as a concept influenced by genetics, environmental input, cultural influence, cognition and emotion.

The third part of the book provides clinical perspectives from practitioners and researchers from body and movement therapies who often face body memories on a daily basis in their clinical work. Christine Caldwell writes about sensation, movement, and emotion and explicit procedures for implicit memories. Marianne Eberhard-Kaechele shows how memory, metaphor and mirroring can be used in dance movement therapy with trauma patients. Paivi Pilvänäinene provides a comprehensive overview of the theory and works of Eric Jandel and relates them to the concept of body memory, describing a movement process for eight women. Yona Shahar-Levy introduces her approach Emotomics with clinical examples from patients. Heidrun Panhofer et al analyze the possibility of verbalizing meaning related processes in movement and conclude that much of the nonverbal therapeutic processes cannot – and in fact – need not be verbalized. Ilka Konopatsch and Helen Payne describe the use of authentic movement to trigger body memory and metaphors from the body. Helle Winter provides a phenomenological description and detailed analysis of the processes of three patients participating in movement therapy. Sabine Koch and Steve Harvey present two single case studies, underlining the role of movement therapy for traumatized dissociative patients. Elmar Kruihoff presents Gendlin's concepts of focusing and the felt sense as an aspect of body memory. Johannes Michalak, Jan Burg and Thomas Heidenreich provide a comprehensive overview of mindfulness based psychotherapy.

The last part of the book concludes with the most important points of the book, summarizing the state of the art concerning research on body memory. It shows the impact of the studies collected and discusses the relevance of body memory with selected populations from the perspective of embodied therapies.

The integrative, transdisciplinary approach to body memory presented in this book shows

indeed how the different perspectives are not merely presented side by side or assumed as self-enclosed and independent disciplines. More so, they converge in considering body memory as an inherently dynamic phenomenon. Body memory unfolds itself in time and space; it is something we constantly enact in our relation with the world and with others. Similarly, the transition from body memory into language, for example the transition from implicit to explicit memory, is to be considered as inherently dynamic. The book lays the groundwork for investigating a core phenomenological topic and invites to undertake further research to unfold the rich aspects provided by the phenomenon of body memory.

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We are grateful to Heidrun for her generosity in forwarding her review of this excellent publication for the benefit of our readers.