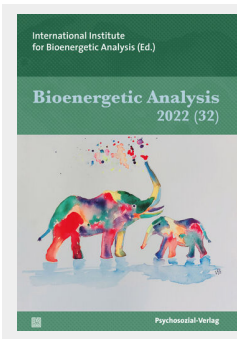


Thomas Heinrich

Pride and Prejudice



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Pride and Prejudice¹

The Bioenergetic Work with LGBTIQ*

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Abstracts

This Conference paper accepts the challenge of talking about the plurality of LGBTIQ in twenty minutes, as well as describing how we as Bioenergetic therapists can work with LGBTIQ* clients to support them in finding their self-esteem to get self-effective.

Keywords: homonegativity, transnegativity, narcissism, hetero-centric, cis-centered

Orgulho e Preconceito

O Trabalho Bioenergético com LGBTIQ* (Portuguese)

Este artigo apresentado na Conferência aceita o desafio que é falar sobre a pluralidade do LGBTIQ em vinte minutos, bem como descrever como nós, como terapeutas Bioenergéticos, podemos trabalhar com clientes LGBTIQ* para apoiá-los a encontrar sua auto-estima tornando-se auto-suficientes.

Orgoglio e pregiudizio

Il lavoro bioenergetico con LGBTIQ* (Italian)

Questo documento della Conferenza accetta la sfida di parlare della pluralità di LGBTIQ in venti minuti e descrive come noi, come terapeuti bioenergetici, possiamo lavorare con i clienti LGBTIQ* per aiutarli a trovare la loro autostima per diventare auto-efficaci.

Orgueil et Préjugés

Le travail en Analyse bioénergétique avec les LGBTIQ* (French)

Cet article de conférence relève le défi de parler de la pluralité des LGBTIQ en vingt minutes, ainsi que de décrire comment nous, thérapeutes bioénergétiques, pouvons travailler

¹ Panel Presentation at the 26th IIBA Conference, October 2021.

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avec les clients LGBTQ* pour les aider à retrouver leur estime de soi afin de devenir auto-efficaces.

Orgullo y Prejuicio

El Trabajo Bioenergético con LGBTQ* (Spanish)

Esta ponencia acepta el reto de hablar sobre la pluralidad de LGBTQ en veinte minutos, así como describir cómo nosotros, como terapeutas bioenergéticos, podemos trabajar con clientes LGBTQ* para apoyarles en la búsqueda de su autoestima para conseguir ser efectivos para sí mismos.

Stolz und Vorurteil

Die bioenergetische Arbeit mit LGBTQ* (German)

Dieser Konferenzbeitrag nimmt die Herausforderung an, in zwanzig Minuten etwas über die Pluralität von LGBTQ* zu sagen und zu beschreiben, wie wir als bioenergetische Therapeut*innen mit LGBTQ*-Klient*innen arbeiten können, um sie dabei zu unterstützen, ihr Selbstwertgefühl zu finden und selbstwirksam zu werden.

Гордость и предубеждение

Биоэнергетическая работа с ЛГБТИК* (Russian)

Этот доклад на конференции берет на себя смелость рассказать о множественности ЛГБТИК за двадцать минут, а также описать, как мы, биоэнергетические терапевты, можем работать с клиентами ЛГБТИК*, чтобы поддержать их в поиске оценки “я” для достижения эффективности

傲慢与偏见

运用躯体动力分析和LGBTIQ工作 (Chinese)

这篇会议论文是接受了在20分钟之内讨论关于LGBTIQ的多元性讨论的挑战的结果，描述了躯体动力分析师如何与LGBTIQ的来访者工作，支持他们找回自尊从而获得自我效能。

Introduction

About one month before the presentation, I watched a complex of broadcasts in a German television channel about German people of color (3SAT, 2021). The scientists who were interviewed in the broadcast (namely Karim Fereidoni, Juliane Degner, Iniobong Essien, Joshua Kwesi Aikins, Alice Hasters) talked about the prejudice Germans of color are confronted with every day. As a central example there was one question quoted: “Where are you coming from?” If the German of

color answers “I am from Berlin”, the next sentence will be “No, I mean where are you really coming from?”

Of course, it was a simplification of the many kinds of discrimination Germans of color are confronted with in their native country. The “reduction to the one question” makes the issue fit in the broadcast format, from where the idea of prejudice, discrimination and violence could be explained in simple words, in probably too simple ways.

Preparing my presentation, I felt in a similar position: How can I talk about LGBTIQ* showing the complexity and their pluralities of lifestyles coming from the different questions they have to solve in their lives and giving the audience an idea of their issues in therapy, especially in Bioenergetic Analysis in a twenty-minute talk?

One Sunday later, some members of the new elected German parliament were interviewed in a further broadcast. There was a black German who talked about his goals for his election period. I couldn’t follow his speech, because I was busy with my perceptions that his German was pure and accent-free. “Ouch!”

One of my friends is a German of color. When I saw the first broadcast I mentioned above, I had the impulse to get into contact with her. Then I thought why should I? To show her: “Look, I am interested in your problems!” No! It is not her problem. She knows about discrimination and violence every day.

Implicit Association Test

It is up to me to change something. It is important for me, that I was so impressed by the information I obtained there: the information about the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998), with which somebody can check his/her own attitude towards different groups of the society, in this specific situation the attitude towards white people and people of color; information about the doll test of Mamie and Kenneth Clark from 1939/40 (Clark & Clark, 1950), which was used to examine Afro-American children’s internalized racism. The Afro-American children had to assign all attributes they were told to a white or a black doll, which had no differences but the color of their skin. The children pointed whenever a negative attribute was mentioned to the black doll. And it broke my heart to see that they made clear that they would rather play with the white doll but identified themselves with the black one.

When I found the Implicit Association Test on the internet (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>), I did it to check my racism and was positively surprised

to get the result: “Your data suggest: balanced attitude between whites and blacks”. – Was it really my balanced attitude or a bias of the test?

Then, I thought what will probably happen, if I run this test referring to homo- and heterosexuality. As a gay man, who is out thirty-eight years now, founding and leading a gay and lesbian counseling center for seventeen years, working still with queer teams and especially with gay clients, my attitude between heterosexuals and homosexuals should be balanced as well, if not more positive on homosexuals. What I found was “Their data suggest: Strong automatic preference for heterosexual over homosexual people.” Ooops! – Should the process of internalized homonegativity be kind of the same stability than the internalized racism for the Afro-American children in the study of the Clarks, of which they suffered from?

Attitude Change

Actually, I hope I can give you some inspiration with this presentation to go further with your own studies and trials to change your attitudes about racism, gender, homo-, bi-, trans-, and inter negativity. If you are interested in gaining more knowledge about the lifestyle of LGBTIQ*, which would be the first step to proof and change an attitude: search for them in your area! The Internet will help you to find contact. If you build up connections with them, it will enhance your capability to work with your LGBTIQ* clients (i. e., knowing where they could refer to in their environment) and it will make your life easier and more colorful – independently if you are part of this community till now or not.

If you are interested in gaining more knowledge about specific issues LGBTIQ* are dealing with in their lives, an entrance could be my article in the IIBA Journal No. 29 (Heinrich, 2019). You will find there a clearer definition of each group, the importance of coming out processes and those of transition, of internalized negativity towards the own subgroup, the impact of intersectional aspects (that means that you are suffering more of stress, if you are not only homosexual but also a woman or/and person of color or/and trans) and so on. If you want to have deeper information about the therapy and counseling of LGBTIQ* clients, you will find more about in Göth & Kohn (2014) and in Günter, Teren & Wolf (2021).

This might sound a little bit snappish or snarky to you. But this is because the situation of LGBTIQ* differs a lot from the laws of a country and the culture of a region. And this can change rapidly – mostly to the worse – by some new

governmental issues. So, the differences are huge: some countries, like Iran and Saudi Arabia have death penalty laws for homosexual men. But even countries such as Germany, where Lesbians and Gay men are allowed to marry and to adopt at least the child of the partner, there is a Transsexual Law, that order what trans persons have to do to get the medical treatments for sexual reassignment paid by their health insurances and to get allowance to change their documents referring to the sex they are identified with. And even in Germany a peak of the iceberg of hate-crimes and all-day violence against LGBTIQ* was the murder of two gay men on October 4th, 2020, who were walking as tourists in a big German city and which the mass media didn't report as a murder by hatred for a long time. And Lesbians reported in a survey of our counseling center PLUS that some of them experienced physical violence of their fathers or husbands in the period of coming out to their families (Haas & Göth, 2006).

But there are other issues, with which LGBTIQ* are bothered with during their everyday life: do school principals out trans teenagers at their school in front of the whole class or are trans teenagers allowed to change their clothes in the locker room of the gender they are identified with? Have lesbian girls a possibility to meet other lesbian girls in a safe space like a youth group for lesbian and queer girls in the city where they live, or which is located at least close by? Is it possible for a boy to embrace his girl- and boyfriends, and hang around in body contact with them in public without being exposed and probably as well bodily attacked as a "faggot" from the other people around? Why do some gay men discriminate other gay men as "queens"? Why do some lesbians accuse trans men of betrayal and reducing the diversity of specifically female patterns of desire?

Two Important Dimensions

I would like to focus here on one issue: In the groups of LGBTIQ* there are 2 different dimensions of sex, which make clear how different these groups are LGB – these letters stand for Lesbians, Gay men and Bisexuals – are dealing with a non-heterosexual sexual orientation: That means that their problem in this world is the sex of the persons they are attracted to. Trans and Inter persons are dealing with the sex and gender, which is how they are referred to by others.

In the last decade, more and more trans adults and teenagers came in our gay and lesbian counseling center in Mannheim and asked for support. What became clear to me during my work with them is, that if there is a questioning of others about their sex or gender, its impact on their life is so much deeper than merely

bothering about the sex of the person you are longing for or living with. I don't want to make the problems of LGB smaller. The stress a person has to deal with is dependent upon the amount of support the person gets from the environmental response to further prejudice and discrimination. So it might be that a trans child could develop more easily in a setting of an open mind family than a gay boy does in a fundamentalistic religious family with patriarchal values and structures.

What I want to clarify is, that the groups of LGBTIQ* are pretty different among each other, and there is a big difference in the enjoyment of life even within the individual groups. And because of the two dimensions of sex within the LGB and the TI there could be persons who are in more than one group: it is possible that a trans person can be gay or lesbian. The most of them, who I could get to know describe their sexual orientation anyhow as pansexual.

Devaluation Through Prejudice, Discrimination and Violence

I am coming to the main issue on which I would like to focus in this presentation: all people who are suffering from prejudice, discrimination and violence are suffering from devaluation. On top of it, most people of color and the LGBTIQ* suffer from the lack of an adequate response or acknowledgement starting by looks of others of their social environment.

In the language of trans and inter people there is the term of "being misgendered": they experience being assigned to the wrong gender. That is the biological assigned gender, which differs from their identity gender, with which they feel authentic. Another study of our counseling center showed that persons who cannot be clearly assigned to one gender are more exposed to physical violence (Göth & Jäger, 2019).

And as well, lesbian girls and women, and gay boys and men, suffer from feedback: growing up in a hetero-normative world of about 70–95% of heterosexuals (TNS-Emnid, 2001), they get – if they get at all – flirty looks from the wrong, the opposite sex pupils and adults. At least in the time before or while in coming out, they hide their own looking onto a desired person as well. So, there is almost no experience of being seen as a person in her/his sexual attractiveness and needs.

In difference to people of color, where normally at least one part of the family suffers from the same devaluating prejudice, discrimination, and violence, LGBTIQ* children grow up in a family without their parents knowing about

their being “different” from them. Here the term “cuckoo kid” is an image to describe this situation of being “the only one” and therefore “a lonely one” in their world.

In terms of therapy, we would describe this as a narcissistic wound. In the post Freud Psychoanalysis, homosexuality was seen as a specific characteristic of neuroticism (Radó, 1965; Bergler, 1956). This view is also found in Reich's early writings (1927). So probably Lowen adopted those views in his book *Love and Orgasm* (1965) and saw homosexuality as a form of early narcissism. But since we now understand better the environment in which LGBTIQ* are growing up, it becomes clear that it is the other way around: being and growing up as LGBTIQ* leads to a bigger narcissistic wound. The German gay liberation movement in the 1970 was provoked by the movie “It is not the homosexual who is perverted, but the situation in which he lives” (Praunheim, 1971). Internalizing the devaluation by the social environment leads to the well-known internalized negativity referring towards their own sexual orientation or gender identity, which almost all LGBTIQ* suffer from in a certain way. In former times this was called internalized trans-, bi, or homophobia, but this sets an anxiety in the foreground, which is not the root of the problem. It is not the fear of LGBTIQ*, which puts them under pressure, it is the hatred about their being different that makes them suffer in the societies of this world. These wounds of the body-self need support and acknowledgement to analyze the experiences of deep psychic injuries and to heal and build up a stable self-esteem. This would be the base that LGBTIQ* clients can become self-effective into action for their coming out and/or transition and building up a self-chosen environment of relationships and for their self-realization.

Some LGBTIQ* who come into the state of self-acceptance seem to overdo this state. They look proud and celebrate their liberation day, mostly known as “transgender day of remembrance” and “Gay and Lesbian Pride” day with a specific parade and lifestyle in some cases in an extroverted style. But isn't it another form of discrimination to criticize them for developing being proud about their art of being?

Therapeutic Work

Taking this for granted, we are coming to the first and important attitude as therapists of LGBTIQ* clients: Taking them seriously in their needs of valuing their special situation, it is important to support them in their own specific art

of living. On the other hand, it is important to focus as well on their experiences of being devaluated and hurt, to feel the pain again, and feel not to be alone or even abandoned with this again. So, the possibility can develop to stay in their individual kind of being and develop the self-realization from there on.

As we have seen, helpful therapeutic work with LGBTIQ* needs to turn the connection between narcissism and homo- or transsexuality upside-down: not that homo- and transsexuality are characteristics of a narcissistic disturbance, but that the narcissistic lack of acknowledgement make LGBTIQ* suffer specially from society's hetero- and cis-centrist attitudes. Then, we could understand that especially with trans clients the so-called co-morbidity of diseases like social anxiety, eating disorders, and depression are not to be solved, before we can give them our acceptance, but afterwards. In Germany, this acceptance is materialized in an expert's report which trans clients need to get the hormone treatments and operations for sex reassignment paid by the health insurances.

More than that, we can help LGBTIQ* clients if we change the image of the perfect gender role models like they were fixed in Lowen's patriarchal understanding of the gender roles of his time. I am not the first who has criticized this view of Lowen. I well remember the International Conference in Seville 2007, when Fina Pla presented on a panel about the need to change Lowen's role model of the "right" women. But I don't see that there are enough new Bioenergetic ideas written down how we see a strong and mature woman of today and how we can accompany girls and women there. Still, the main resources of the theory taught in Bioenergetics are still Lowen's books.

In his book *Narcissism* (1984), Lowen allows men to have less feeling to stay in the higher-rated Phallic-Narcissistic Character, while women who act the same than them, are rated down to the Narcissistic Character Type – rated down in the sense that they are lower in a row Lowen built up of different narcissistic expressions in different personality types.

Working in a gay and lesbian counseling center for such a long time, I had the honor to get to know a lot of lesbians who are not oriented to a world guided by men (which would be patriarchal). They have developed a stronger focus on orienting to a woman's way of living, which includes having to work harder to earn the same money as their male colleagues or to get the same positions as men in a company, and at the same time having less resources from their families of origin. The identity they developed in this misogynistic and homonegative world leads to the devaluation of strong and powerful women.

If we transmit the pictures of patriarchal gender role models of the rigid character structure further and further towards the next generations of bioenergetic

therapists and clients, we do not only keep the gender role of heterosexual men and women fixed, but also of those of lesbians, gay men, trans and intersexual people as well as non-binary persons and queers.

The Power of Words

Let's have a short example how we could start to change perceptions by a new wordings: in the language of today, we discriminate between hetero- and homosexuals. Heterosexuals are persons who are attracted by people of the other sex. Homosexuals are persons who are attracted by people of the same sex. If we would use instead of the terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual", we use the terms "gay" for people who are attracted by men – independently of their own sex – and the term "lesbians" for people who are attracted by women – again independently of their own sex – I guess something would change in our point of view and feeling connected towards others. Nowadays so-called heterosexual men and homosexual women named as "lesbians" would recognize that they would have a lot in common, that is the longing for female bodies and love referring to women. Likewise, nowadays so-called heterosexual women and homosexual men named as "gay" could find more in common than yet. And finally, the sex of the person who is named gay or lesbian wouldn't matter at all. By this means, the focus on the discrimination of the sexes would get less.

Does this sound funny to you? Or queer? Or strange? Or inappropriate? Of course, it is a playful game with our language. But it is not the first time a change of using the language changes something in society. This was done in a good way by people who identify themselves as "queer", even this term was used before and is still as devaluation, if somebody doesn't behave "straight". In contrast, the last USA President changed a lot of negative examples as i. e., "alternative facts" and "great".

But could it be that a new meaning of "gay" and "lesbian" would have to feel funny, queer, strange or inappropriate? Because you would feel marked by a word, which is devaluing in our language of today with all its impacts of being less-worth? – then you might experience what lesbians and gay men are experiencing their whole life from the early childhood on.

But I would like to put the focus of the last minutes on another point, which emerges more and more during the last part: the prejudice against LGBTIQ* and the prevention of their self-esteem, that means pride, are different in dimensions, depth, and complexity. But they are connected around the discrimination and

violence of the sexes. This discrimination seems to be one of the most important ones for the human mankind.

If a woman is pregnant, the first question she gets from others is: “is all fine, in sense of: is it (the fetus) healthy?” and the second one is “Do you know already, if it becomes a boy or a girl?” That could be seen as a kind of funny or boring tradition; if not significantly more female fetuses are aborted than male (The world factbook, 2019).

Following the thought that prejudice, discrimination, and violence of LGBTIQ* has to do with the discrimination of women, we see a high correlation between the freedom and well-being of woman and LGBTIQ* in the same society. There are possibilities that gay men and lesbians can marry and adopt children and the laws are protecting and supporting trans, inter and non-binary people, if women’s rights are high developed. On the other hand, we have the most dangerous situation for women in the fundamentalistic religiously ruled states like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Afghanistan, where at least gay men are prosecuted to death by law and the situation of the LGBTIQ* is mostly not known at all.

So, I ask myself, if there is one thing about LGBTIQ* which would bring the change for inclusion of these subgroups of society, it would be when it is no longer of any interest if a baby were a girl or a boy.

Conclusion

Let me close my presentation with some sentences:

- Prejudice, discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ* is stronger if there is prejudice, discrimination and violence against other groups of the society, especially against women.
- Prejudice, discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ* is stronger, if there are fixed gender role models like in the patriarchal view of mankind.

We need to open our ideas of health for men, women and non-binary persons to their special situation in life. If we look more into how persons are cut down in their individual situation of growing up, we will come to a point where on one hand we have to get political to support the rights of all discriminated groups in the different societies – whether they are Lesbians, Gay men, Bisexuals, trans, inter or non-binary persons, queers, people of color or with disabilities, indigenous people, migrants, religious minorities as Jews outside of Israel, Rohingyas, and all the other discriminated groups which I didn’t mention here. That doesn’t mean

that we don't have to know about the specific situation of their lives. We even have to learn more about them.

Therefore, on the other hand, when we commit ourselves into tracking our own prejudice, discrimination, and violence, we could change the situation in our direct social environment.

On a third hand – yes, if there is plurality we might have even three hands – if we have the image, that every person has an own potential to develop into a full self-realization, then another quote might fit better than women and men or gay and lesbians: “If we would think of the human mankind, that there are as many genders as persons, sex or gender wouldn't be a category to limit people, but everyone could develop in the own potential by them.”

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