

Medard Boss on “Encounter in Psychotherapy”

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Prefatory Remarks

Medard Boss (1903-1990), the Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, was among the original voices of what has variously been termed existential psychotherapy, existential analysis, and Daseinsanalyse. In the full maturity of his experience, he presented a conference paper on psychotherapy that deserves to be known among English-speaking readers. Its theme is *encounter* as the context and basic experience of psychotherapy. The presentation was framed by a critique of psychoanalysis, especially the notion of transference.

This translation of the complete original contribution, which was not published by the author, is offered as a source of material for the study of the efficacy of psychotherapy. The reader is encouraged to investigate Boss’s work at greater length and consider anew the possible contribution of his form of psychotherapy among the many modalities available to patients.

European psychiatrists and psychotherapists continue to take seriously the existential tradition in psychotherapy and, practiced in Austria, Hungary, Greece, Italy, and the Czech Republic, there are active programs of training and clinics where Daseinsanalyse is offered as a psychotherapeutic modality. Psychotherapy based on Boss’s ideas is also now widely practiced in Brazil. It would be a serious lapse if clinical psychologists in America failed to be aware of this modality, especially during the current period of examination of the efficacy of psychotherapy.

The scholarly apparatus I have provided is intended to make the original German and Italian words more intelligible as the reader makes his or her own decisions about what the author intended to say. The notes offer guidance for further study and reflection (see Groth 2017, 2020).¹

1 Acknowledgment: Permission by the editors of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane* (www.psicoterapiae-scienzeumane.it/english.htm) for publication of parts of this translation text is gratefully acknowledged.

I. Introduction

In 1965, Medard Boss published an article titled “Begegnung in der Psychotherapie [Encounter in Psychotherapy]” in the journal *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* [(Boss 1965) = PAP]. A *Vortragsmanuskript* [lecture manuscript] with the same title was included in his selection of twenty-five texts that he considered to be some of his most important contributions (1937-1978) [(Boss 1979) = VPD]. “Begegnung in der Psychotherapie” was presented on May 1, 1964, at a roundtable on the topic held at a meeting of the Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy, led by the Italian psychiatrist Pier Francesco Galli. The transcript of an Italian simultaneous translation of Boss’s contribution, which was given in German, was published as “*L’incontro in psicoterapia, tavola rotonda con Gaetano Benedetti, Medard Boss ed Eugène Minkowski (1964)* [(Migone 2017) = PSU] with previously unpublished material. Immeasurable thanks are owed to Paolo Migone, Pier Francesco Galli, and Marianna Bolko, editors of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, for making this available for publication.

I have compared the Italian transcript with the two texts Boss published so that the reader may see where his thinking about psychotherapy changed from 1964 to 1979. My text is keyed to Boss’s version of his contribution as it appears in VPD. Pagination to this publication (Boss 1979) is provided in brackets throughout the text for the reader who wants to compare the German, Italian, and English versions. Boss provided a summary for the PAP text (Boss 1964) which, for completeness, I have inserted before his responses to the other speakers at the roundtable discussion. The summary does not appear in VPD (Boss 1979). I note where Boss made important edits to the text. These have been given in footnotes. On occasion, Boss altered punctuation. I have not noted these changes if they had no effect on the syntax. In some cases, he chose to capitalize or not capitalize certain words in the later version. These changes have been noted. Any text appearing in the Italian transcript that is not in VPD is given between braces { . . . }. This includes the two introductory paragraphs, two interpolations, and his replies.

In PAP, the source of the text is given as “Referat, gehalten an einem ‘Rundtisch-Gespräch’ anlässlich des Kongresses des Centro Studi di Psicoterapia Clinica in Mailand am 1. Mai. 1964 [Lecture Given at a “Roundtable Discussion” on the Occasion of the Congress of the Center for the Study of Clinical Psychotherapy, in Milan, May 1, 1964]” (source note, p. 287). The Center for the Study of Clinical Psychotherapy was another name for the Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy. In 1979 [PAP], Boss represents his contribution as a “Vortragsmanuskript [lecture manuscript].”

Paolo Migone reports (Migone 2018) that, according to Dr. Pier Francesco Galli, who had organized the roundtable, the opening paragraphs, interpolations, and Boss’s replies published in PSU are based on “a typewritten text that was taken from the audio-recording” of the proceedings. The identity of the simultaneous interpreter (German-to-

Italian), whose voice was the basis for the transcript, is not known, although the individual employed was a professional interpreter. The audio tape is evidently no longer available. The identity of the transcriber is also not known.

The following *English abstract* appears at the conclusion of the article (Migone 2017, 284):

Abstract. The psychotherapeutic encounter. A Round Table of 1964 with Gaetano Benedetti, Medard Boss, and Eugène Minkowski. The interventions at a Round Table held in Milan in 1964, titled “The psychotherapeutic encounter,” are published. This Round Table was organized by the “Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy” (which in the 1970s took the name of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*) within the “Fourth Training Course on Problems of Psychotherapy,” titled “Theoretical issues and clinical cases.” The interventions are by Gaetano Benedetti, Medard Boss, and Eugène Minkowski, who discuss the phenomenological approach in psychotherapy (also Gustav Bally was supposed to participate at this Round Table, but he couldn’t come because of a physical illness). The text of this Round Table was previously unpublished. [*Key words*: Existential phenomenological psychiatry; *Daseinsanalyse*; Psychotherapeutic encounter; Transference; Therapeutic relationship]

Apart from Boss’s footnotes to his published comments in VPD, there are three footnotes provided by Migone. The latter are treated in footnotes as interpolations with the current citation following what appears in PSU. From time to time, I have also added my own comments. There is a great deal that remains open to interpretation in this important text on therapeutic encounter. It is hoped that this translation will stimulate discussion among psychotherapists about the meaning of encounter in the clinical relationship between psychotherapist and client or patient.

The roundtable discussion began with comments by the French psychiatrist Eugène Minkowski (1885-1972) and the Italian psychiatrist Gaetano Benedetti (1920-2013). Boss then made his contribution, which was followed by additional comments by Minkowski, and then Boss replied to the other panelists. Brief concluding remarks by Minkowski brought the roundtable to a conclusion.

II. The Text

A. “Encounter in Psychotherapy”

{First of all, allow me to thank the organizers of this meeting for their invitation to come to Milan. I would also like to thank them for their extremely kind welcome. I have received a most beautiful gift of great symbolic importance.

We are meeting here at this conference to discuss the word ‘encounter [*incontro*]’, which represents the focal point of our roundtable. If I am able to engage in this discussion with you, it is because of the invitation of the organizers. It is with great pleasure that I take the floor after our colleague Minkowski and my ex-pupil Benedetti. So let us now tackle the theme of the meeting itself.}

[287] The term “encounter [*Begegnung*]” is becoming more and more important in psychotherapy. By encounter we mean something uniquely human [*jenes spezifisch Menschliche*] that happens when two or more people confront each other or meet face to face. Therefore, an encounter does *not* take place, for example, when two pebbles bump into each other at the bottom of a stream. Nor is² there encounter when a geologist examines such a pebble to discover its chemical and physical composition. Whether we are justified in speaking of encounter when two dogs run towards each other in the street and sniff each other, no cautious scientist will dare to decide. Presumably, like animal psychologists who anthropomorphize them, behaviorists who fully mechanize animals are equally far from an adequate “canine [*hundgemässen*]” understanding of the event. Strictly speaking, the term “encounter” would be in order only if one dog were actually able to perceive the other as³ a dog and grasp it as we do. But we should probably concede such a thing only if it called the other dog a dog in some language.

A human being, however, always understands an encountered fellow human being in advance and primarily as a being [*Wesen*] whose way of being [*Seinsart*] exists [*existiert*] in the same way as his does. That is why such an event [*Ereignis*] deserves the distinctive name encounter. It is well enough known that, before⁴ Freud, doctors tried to ignore or eliminate the human encounter quality [*Begegnungscharakter*] of every relationship between doctor and patient because in the emotional entanglements that belong to it they saw only an obstacle to objective and scientific research and treatment.

Freud, however, not only found the courage to break the silence about the emotional phenomena inherent in the doctor-patient relationship that belong [288] to all therapy, in particular to psychotherapy. He even made clear that they are the authentic foundation of all psychotherapy.

This reorientation of medicine to the human [*auf Mitmenschliches*], to the temperamental, emotional [*auf Stimmungsmässiges, Gefühlsmässiges*], to affection, sympathy, to love and hate, was something so unheard of in medicine that Freud was obviously frightened by his own courage. In any case, he promptly began to tone down the encounter phenomenon [*Begegnungsphänomen*] and undertook to explain away in causal-genetic, psychodynamic terms what he had discovered in every doctor-patient relationship. As we know, he tried to achieve this with the help of certain *termini tecnici* and the, at bottom,⁵ hypothetical attempts at derivation on which they are built. That is why in psychoanalytic theory what supports [*Tragenden*] all therapy became something merely “transferred [*Übertragenes*],” transference [*Übertragung*]” and “countertransference [*Gegenübertra-*

2 **is:** PAP reads ‘spielt’ [is enacted] for ‘ist’.

3 **as:** PAP italicizes ‘als’.

4 **before:** PAP italicizes ‘vor’.

5 **at bottom:** PAP reads ‘zugrundeliegenden [underlying]’ for ‘zugrunde liegenden’

gung].” The phenomenon immediately showing itself was robbed of its qualities of authenticity and truth, was literally condemned as a “sham bond [*falsche Verknüpfung*],”⁶ as a “deception [*Täuschung*],” as something “unreal, bogus [*Unreales, Unechtes*],” as something to be understood as an illusion [*Illusion*] by the patient and by the doctor, and to be overcome in the treatment.

Just how much Freud’s hypothesis of transference misses the true nature of the doctor-patient encounter becomes apparent in the clearest way in the numerous serious contradictions in which Freud became involved in his application of the concept of transference. On the one hand, Freud provides the psychotherapist with no fewer than three arguments that should help convince the analysand of the illusory character, unreality [*Unwirklichkeit*] and inauthenticity [*Unechtheit*] of transference love and of the fact that he himself was creating sham emotional ties. Above all, one should make it clear⁷ to the analysand that the actual situation [*Situation*] of the treatment [*Kur*] does not provide an occasion for the development of feelings of love and hate. Moreover, one should point out to patients that any actual being in love would make them merely obedient in following the fundamental rule of analysis instead of requiring evidence of love on the part of the analyst simply because the beloved one wished for the observance of the fundamental rule [by patients]. Finally, the inauthenticity of transference love was to be seen in that fact that it is not something new in itself proceeding from the present situation but instead, without exception,⁸ consists of repetitions [*Wiederholungen*] and cheap imitations [*Abklatschen*] of earlier infantile reactions [*Reaktionen*].

[289] But then Freud himself has to admit that, in proposing this, he has not exactly gotten to the truth of the matter. He contradicts himself with the statement that one has no right⁹ to deny the character of “true love” to the infatuation brought to light¹⁰ in the analytic situation. Then again, at one point Freud directs the doctor to limit his encounter with the patient to the detachment [*Distanz*] a surgeon maintains in relation to the organ he operates on, or even to the indifference of a mirror in relation to its reflected image. In another place, however, he warns against this: to give too little¹¹ to a patient merely because the patient loves him may not only be an injustice to the patient but also nothing short of a technical error on the part of the doctor.¹²

6 See note 14, below

7 **make it clear:** PAP reads ‘klar machen’ [make clear] instead of ‘klarmachen’.

8 **without exception:** PAP reads ‘durchwegs’ [throughout] instead of ‘durchweg’.

9 **right:** PAP reads ‘Anrecht’ [claim] instead of ‘Recht’.

10 **brought to light:** PAP reads ‘zutagetretenden’ [eruptive] instead ‘zutage tretenden’.

11 **too little:** PAP reads ‘zu wenig’ [not enough] instead of ‘zuwenig’.

12 **Footnote in VPD and PAP:** “Vgl. S. Freud: *Bemerkungen über die Übertragungsliebe*. Ges. Schr. Bd. VI, p. 129/30. Leipzig, Wien, Zürich 1925; *Wege der psychoanalytischen Therapie*, a.a.O., p. 142 und H. D. *Tribute to Freud*, p. 21, New York 1956.” Boss refers to the first collected German edition of Freud’s writings. See Sigmund Freud, “Observations on Transference-Love (Further Recommenda-

In actuality, Freud can identify no factic [*faktisches*] phenomenon in his interpretation [Interpretation] of encounter in psychotherapy as “transference” and “countertransference.” It therefore remains a purely intellectual [*gedanklich*] hypothesis and speculation of an obviously self-assuring nature. In any event, that the childish *form* of the claims of love for the doctor on the part of many analysands is what remains of,¹³ or is the distortion of, an unfortunate parental deficiency [*Behinderung*] in no way implies that in such a form they are not also actually meant for the doctor but are rather “basically [*im Grunde*]” for someone else and have been transferred [*übertragen*] from him or her. That analysands who have remained childlike are only able to see the parental in all living human beings, even the analyst, is likewise¹⁴ anything but evidence for the “transfer [*Übertragung*]” of something to something not at all actually intended [*Gemeinte*].

Also surprising is the invalidity of another so-called argument with which Freud wants to prove the inauthenticity [*Unechtheit*] of the feelings in an encounter or in the transference in psychotherapy. He says that transference love is unreal [*unreal*], inauthentic [*unecht*], a false connection [*falsche Verknüpfung*]¹⁵ of an old affect [*Affektes*] with a not actually intended object, given that “the treatment situation [*Situation der Kur*] does not occasion the emergence of feelings of love and hate.”¹⁶ In actuality, however, the analytic situation

tions on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis” [1914], *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth) [= SE] XII, 157-171 (citing 166-167); “Lines of Advance in Psycho-Analytic Therapy” [1919], SE XVII, 157-168 (citing 164); and H[ilda] D[oolittle], *Tribute to Freud* (New York: Pantheon, 1956). On the page cited in Doolittle’s memoir of her encounter with Freud in 1933, Doolittle wrote that Freud (who was then 77) was “beating with his hand, with his fist, on the head-piece of the old-fashioned horsehair sofa” – the couch on which she had been reclining during a session – which caused her sit up and face Freud. “Consciously I was not aware of having said anything that might account for the Professor’s outburst.” Then came Freud’s emphatic words: “The trouble is – I am an old man – *you do not think it worth your while to love me.*” The importance of Boss’s reference would seem to extend to Doolittle’s words that appear next (p. 22): “The impact of his words was too dreadful – I simply felt nothing at all.” In other words and to Boss’s point, genuine human encounter between them had been short-circuited.

13 **what remains:** PAP reads ‘blieb’ [remained] instead of ‘geblieben’.

14 **likewise:** PAP reads ‘noch einmal’ [once again] instead of ‘ebenfalls’.

15 Here Boss is quoting Sigmund Freud’s expression “falsche Verknüpfung” in his early paper, “The Psychotherapy of Hysteria” [1895], in Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria* [1895], SE II, p. 294. The passage in quotation marks that follows is a paraphrase of a passage from Freud’s *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [1917], SE XVI, p. 442, Lecture XXVII, “Transference [Die Übertragung].” There Freud does not speak specifically of love and hate. His discussion is explicitly about female patients: “Wir meinen eine Übertragung von Gefühlen auf die Person des Arztes, weil wir nicht glauben, daß die Situation der Kur eine Entstehung solcher Gefühle rechtfertigen könne.” The Strachey translation runs: “We mean a transference of feelings on to the person of the doctor, since we do not believe that the situation in the treatment could justify the development of such feelings.”

16 Boss uses the psychoanalytic term *Objekt*. From the start, Freud’s choice of this noun has had an

as such has always been one of such maximal indulgence, and at the same time privation, that the analytic situation itself motivates emotions of love and hate [290] directed towards the analyst that are as strong as they would be in a child-parent relationship. Or is there any other such interpersonal situation in which one adult human being is as steadfastly and intensively there for the other as the analyst is for the analysand in analysis?

What the Freudian concept of transference makes of the encounter between doctor and patient is not only theoretically inexplicable and untenable. It also has serious and often harmful consequences at the practical and therapeutic levels. This is easily understood if one considers that Freud's transference hypothesis unjustifiably reduces to the level of a fiction, to something inauthentic, that which the analysand experiences as something most real and most important, namely, his feelings with regard to the analyst, and this in neurotics who in particular as a group need validation of their inmost emotional life.

Understandably, Freud's hypothesis about encounter based on the theory of transference has already often been brought into question. Early on, Freud himself could no longer trace back to individual drives [*Einzeltriebe*] the feelings of hate and love that manifest themselves during the psychotherapeutic encounter but had to attribute the love and hate to an overall I [*Gesamt-Ich*].¹⁷

Later on, dissatisfied with the transference hypothesis, some of his students differentiated neurotic transference components from nontransference¹⁸ normal components in the encounter between analyst and analysand. {In this regard, I would like to mention the extremely interesting and detailed work of Daniel Lagache of Paris.}¹⁹ Still later, instead of talking about the libidinal cathexis [*Libidobesetzung*] of the drive object others

off-putting effect on psychoanalytic discussions in general, since the work 'object' suggests a thing (a what), not a human being (a who). The term *Object* indicates something intrapsychic (for example, the representation of another person) at which a feeling, for example, is directed. "Object relation" theory in psychoanalysis has studied the complexities of this inner world of representations of the self and other people. It is just this way of speaking, however, that makes it possible to imagine that something like feelings experienced in the relationship between the two people in analysis are merely intrapsychic and therefore somehow unreal.

17 **Footnote in VDP and PAP:** "Freud: *Triebe und Triebchiksale*, Ges. Schr. Bd. V, p. 462/63, Leipzig, Wien, Zürich." Sigmund Freud [1915], "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," in *SE XIV*, p. 136. Since it is, by tradition, regularly forgotten, it bears repeating that Freud used the very homely pronoun 'Ich' ('I'), not (per Strachey) the Latin *ego*. The 1915 formulation 'Gesamt-Ich' is curious, rendered by Strachey as "total ego." It has also been translated as "total self" and seems to refer to the psychic apparatus as a whole, not a structural or topographic element of it. One might refer instead to the "complete I." In the text referred to, Freud uses the term after questioning whether a *drive* can love or hate an object.

18 **nontransference:** PAP reads 'nicht-übertragenen' [non-transference] instead of 'nichtübertragenen'.

19 {Footnote in PSU (p. 278): {Daniel Lagache, Le problème du transfert. *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, 1952, 16, 1/2: 5-75 (Relazione alla *XIVe Conférence des Psychanalystes de Langue française*

spoke about the encounter of two subjects or two persons, or of an I-, Thou- or we-relationship.²⁰

However, as soon as one considers more closely what various authors give evidence of about the basic constitution, about the nature of these subjects, persons, I's and Thou's that meet each other,²¹ one notices a worrisome fuzziness and lack of clarity about the new basic concepts. A totality and unity is merely assigned to the human being [*menschlichen Wesen*] represented in this way – so also an awareness, a freedom of will, and a sense of responsibility. But the so-called totality and unity remains a purely formal expression and says nothing about the nature [*Natur*] and essence [*Wesen*] [291] of this human totality and unity that lets us see how it could in fact make awareness, freedom, and responsibility understandable. Moreover, we learn nothing about how consciousness ought to be correlated with the subject, the person; nor do we hear anything decisive about what human freedom consists of and with respect to whom the responsibility should be applicable.

How can we say something adequate and meaningful enough about the encounter of two beings as long as insight into their nature [*Natur*] remains so obscure? {This is almost impossible, and therefore the premise of every sensible discussion about this and about encounter in psychotherapy as well must be an essential deepening of our knowledge of the specific nature of what is human. Basically, this consideration alone may lead to a clarification of the vague bases of our psychological science and our practical psychotherapeutic work, and I have always sought this, whether in ancient Asian [oriental] philosophies²² or in modern existential analysis.}²³

“Le problème du transfert”, Parigi, 1 novembre 1951) (trad. it.: Il problema del transfert. In: Lagache D. et al., *Il problema del transfert*. 1895-2015. A cura di Riccardo Galiani e Stefania Napolitano. Roma: Alpes, 2016, pp. 3-101). Vedi anche: Some aspects of transference. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1953, 34, 1: 1-10 (Relazione a un incontro della *British Psycho Analytical Society*, London, 4 April 1951). [N.d.R.]] Daniel Lagache, “Some Aspects of Transference” [1951], in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34, 1953, pp. 1-10. This reference was evidently added by the Italian editors of the roundtable proceedings since it does not appear in either PAP or VPD.

20 **or of an I-, Thou- or we-relationship:** PAP reads “von einer Ich-, Du- oder einer Wir-Beziehung” [of an I-, Thou- or of a we-relationship] instead of ‘von einer Ich-, Du- oder Wir-Beziehung’.

21 **meet each other:** PAP does not include ‘einander’ [each other].

22 This is an important omission from both PAP and VPD that is preserved in the Italian transcript (PSU, p. 278). In 1956, Boss traveled to India and Indonesia, where he stayed for more than six months. In 1958, he returned to India for three months. Then, in his early fifties and well established as a psychiatrist, and having been in analysis with Freud, a student of Jung, and an assistant of Eugen Bleuler, he had become disappointed with Western medicine’s approach to “mental illness” and journeyed “East” in search of a perspective on human nature that would provide him with an alternative to the Western medical model, which he did not abandon, however. In all, the experience was personally transformative as well as intellectually stimulating. It resulted in a remarkable book, *Indienfahrt eines Psychiaters* (Boss 1959), which was translated into English rather

Basically, this consideration alone may well be occasion enough to abandon, once and for all, all preconceived prejudicial notions about the essence [Wesen] of man, concepts such as subject [Subjekt], person [Person], psyche [Psyche], I [Ich] and Thou [Du], and to begin to see the nearest, immediately given and indisputable fact of the matter [Tatbestand].

But the nearest, indisputable, essential [*wesensmäßig*], immediately given manifestation [*Erscheinung*] of human existing [*menschlichen Existierens*] is its being-in-the world.²⁴ There is not a single human being [Wesen] (who rightly merits such a name) who does not before all else experience himself as existent [*seiend*] in a world.²⁵ Man does not *have*

badly in 1965 as *A Psychiatrist Discovers India* (Boss 1965). The fourth edition of the German edition of the book contains an important new preface, “After Thirty Years” (Boss 1987). Soon after he returned from his second trip, Boss began his extensive collaboration with the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) that resulted in the Zollikon seminars (1959-1969), a series of thirteen seminars held over a ten-year period in Medard Boss’s office and home in the Zollikon suburb of Zürich. To his astonishment, Boss recounted, he found that Heidegger’s outlook coincided in many ways with that of the gurus with whom he apprenticed. On the influence of Eastern philosophy on Heidegger, see Parkes (1987), May (1989, 1996), Buchner (1989), and Ma (2008).

23 It is not clear what Heidegger would have made of this formulation, which takes the ontological technical term (*In-der-Welt-sein*) and makes it over into an ontic description of (human) existing [*Existieren*] for which being [*Sein*] as such is fundamentally important and at issue. Boss preserves the impersonal pronoun ‘that’ in this formulation in favor of the personal ‘who’. Heidegger is clear, however, that *Da-sein* (existence) is not a person, which Boss may seem to suggest. Existing and being are easily confused in discussions of existential philosophy and psychology, including existential analysis (*Daseinsanalyse*, literally, analysis of existence). The key insight seems to be that we cannot experience our own *being* (a gerund of the verb ‘to be’ understood as a *transitive* verb). Boss may have had in mind here Viktor Frankl’s logotherapy, which came to be the first modality of psychotherapy known in English as “existential analysis.” The Italian term *analisi esistenziale* was already in use by the mid-1940s.

24 Anyone listening to Boss’s comments was likely familiar with Heidegger’s “In-der-Welt-sein” (hyphenated), routinely translated as “being-in-the-world.” Boss is saying that the most obvious phenomenon, that is, the phenomenon closest to us as human beings is *our own existing* (*Existenz*). In the context of Heidegger’s thought, existing [*Existieren*] as something that happens is ontologically restricted to the human being and not applicable to whatever else is there [*das Seiende*]. Being-there [*Da-sein*] is equivalent to being in the world [*In-der-Welt-sein*]. There is much to say about the meaning of this “in,” which is central to Heidegger’s discussion of being [*Sein*] in *Being and Time* [*Sein und Zeit*] (Heidegger 1977) soon to be referred to by Boss. This is the book that radicalized Boss’s own thought and practice as a psychiatrist when he came across it reading during his spare time while on duty as a physician serving in the Swiss military during World War II in the 1940s. See Boss’s engaging self-portrait (Boss 1973) and my translation of the essay (Boss 2019). There is still so much to say about Heidegger on being [*Sein*], existence [*Dasein*], and a human being’s existing [*Existenz*].

25 **as existent in a world:** PAP reads ‘in-einer-Welt-seiend’ [being-in-a-world] instead of ‘in einer Welt seiend’. The difference is subtle but important. In PAP the participle ‘seiend’ modifies ‘in’. In VPD, however, Boss uses Heidegger’s term “In-der-Welt-sein” as it is found in *Sein und Zeit*, thus making it clear anew to the reader what is at stake here: ‘Being [*Sein*]’ (which is still capitalized in

a world. If one claims that, then his simple being-in-the-world has already been obscured and hopelessly intellectually dichotomized [*entzweit*]. If one says he *has* a world, then he has already and irrevocably dissociated [*getrennt*] himself as the possessor [*Besitzer*] of a property [*Besitztum*]. But, furthermore, as a possessing, owning subject one remains completely in the dark about his nature [*Natur*]. Man just *is* his being-in-the-world. But, of course, to begin with this statement is still nothing but an initial, formal approach to his being [*Wesen*].

Much (in fact, too much) that concerns itself with the analytics of existence [*Daseinanalytik*] just stops here, not least of all so-called “psychiatric daseinsanalysis [*psychiatrische Daseinsanalyse*].”²⁶ We cannot too sufficiently and strongly warn against such stopping at the surface. The consequence of this is that the expression being-in-the world becomes merely a *façon de parler*, that being-in-the-world comes to be thought of at best as only a new feature [*Eigenschaft*] of subjectivity conceptualized in the traditional way. With that, the bearer of this new property, the old subjectivity, necessarily still remains unexplained, just as we said earlier that what has as its essence having a world continues to remain obscure. Here one truly has to have the courage and strength [292] to completely drop²⁷ the convenient but essentially meaningless idea of subjectivity.²⁸

most English translations of Heidegger’s texts). Heidegger says that existence (Da-sein, hyphenated in the later Heidegger, to denote being-there or There-being) is “to be in the world,” while Boss’s formulation speaks of “a” world “in” which Being [Sein] is highlighted.

26 **existence analytics:** PAP reads ‘Daseinsanalytik’ [analytics of existence] instead of ‘Daseinanalytik’. We should remind the reader that Boss’s first book written under the influence of Heidegger was *Psychoanalyse und Daseinsanalytik* [*Psychoanalysis and the Analytics of Existence*], not *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*, as an English translation published in 1963 was titled. Boss did eventually use the term *Daseinsanalyse*, knowing that he risked having his view confused with that of Ludwig Binswanger. He settled on the English translation ‘da-seinanalysis’ for his form of therapy. In the fifteen years between the Milan conference and the publication of his collected papers a therapeutic modality called Daseinsanalysis associated with Boss had been named and he was deemed its founder, an honor he disavowed, however, wanting nothing to do with a “school,” as his memoir (Boss 1973) points out. He certainly makes this clear in the final clause of the sentence, alluding to Binswanger, where he writes disparagingly of “psychiatric daseinsanalysis.” Boss’s distancing himself from the philosophical term ‘Daseinsanalytik’ in VPD is telling. He speaks here simply of an “existence analytics” or “analytics of existence,” perhaps adopting the broader (pre-Google) Aristotelian meaning of procedural analytics. Or it may be an oversight of proofing and should be ‘Daseinsanalytik [analytics of existence]’ as below, in the concluding paragraph of Boss’s prepared comments. In practice, Boss remained both a psychiatrist (a medical doctor, physician, medical psychologist) and a psychoanalyst, which at that time was still the province of psychiatrists, as well as the daseinsanalytic physician. In his *Existential Foundations of Medicine and Psychology* (Boss 1971) he always writes about interventions of “the doctor” and by this he surely meant a physician who had specialized in psychiatry.

27 **drop:** PAP reads ‘fallen zu lassen’ [to let drop] instead of ‘fallenzulassen’

28 **idea of subjectivity:** PAP reads ‘Subjektivitäts-Vorstellung’ [subjectivity-concept] instead of ‘Subjektivitätsvorstellung’

Everything depends on seeing the immediate, perceptibly emergent nature of being-in-the-world, in other words, the quality [*Qualität*] of what is meant by this initial statement about man. That is why already in the introduction to Martin Heidegger's epoch-making *Sein und Zeit* [*Being and Time*]²⁹ it is said with utmost clarity that the entire work is oriented solely and entirely to the qualitative determination of human being-in-the-world and has nothing else in mind.

Qualitatively, however, human existence, human being-in-the-world, is to be understood in its decisive feature as fundamentally nothing other than a listening to [*Vernehmen*] and understanding [*Verstehen*], an enabling of the shining and illuminating of what is encountering it [*Aufgehenlassen- und Lichtenkönnen des ihm Begegnenden*].³⁰ If only one looks at things with eyes wide open, human existing from the beginning³¹ always appears [ereignet sich] only and essentially as a standing out [*Hinausstehen*], an *ex-stare*³² [ex-sisting]³³, existing [*Existieren*] in a cleared area of openness [*gelichteten Offenheitsbere-*

29 Footnote in PSU (p. 279): {Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit. Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, 1927, VIII: 1-438; *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Niemayer [sic], 1927 (trad. it.: *Essere e tempo*. Milano: Bocca, 1953; Milano: Longanesi, 1970). [N.d.R.]}. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977) [*Gesamtausgabe*, 2].

30 Boss's language is often poetic. Here he paints a picture of existing as a synesthetic experience of an auditory-visual sort: a hearing or attending or listening to [*Vernehmen*] and understanding [*Verstehen*], a shedding light on, much as the rising [*Aufgehen*] sun sheds light on and makes visible or possible to see [*Lichtenkönnen*] what has been in the dark. To listen, it is worth noting, has the connotation of a leaning in toward: listing.

31 **from the beginning**: PAP reads 'zum vornherein' [at the outset] instead of 'von vornherein'.

32 **ex-stare**: PAP capitalizes the hyphenated Latin infinitive. This standing [*stehen*] out [*hinaus*] refers to coming into prominence and being conspicuous apart from the rest of what is there. The German verb *hinausstehen*, which combines an adverb (*hinaus*) and a verb (*stehen*), means to project or protrude. Nominalizing the two words captures Heidegger's having pointed to existing as the pre-eminence of human *be-ing*. The usage comes from Heidegger's "Einleitung [Introduction]" (Heidegger 1949) to his inaugural address at the University of Freiburg, *Was ist Metaphysik?* [What Is Metaphysics?]. Another rendering of 'Hinausstehen' would be 'standing apart [*aus*] from [*hin*]'.

33 Again, Boss is following Heidegger who plays on the Latin verb *exstare*, which Heidegger also hyphenates (*ex-stare*). The verb is to be taken as transitive. The gist of the analysis here is that existence is best expressed with the present participle 'existing' [*Existenz*] understood as a form of the transitive verb 'exist'. Existence never has the sense of a finished state or fixed *status* (a word also based on the Latin *stare*, to stand), but is the vibrant forthcoming of human *be-ing*. The proto-Indo-European root of *sto* (on which *stare* is based) has the sense of standing up, assuming the upright posture, which only the human being can do because it is the only creature with feet. Being forthcoming is the very nature of the *who* encountered in psychotherapy with whom the psychotherapist must be so placed as to be ready to meet his advances in encountering him. I think both Heidegger and Boss would have been pleased with this excursion into the sense of the expression "being forthcoming" (a gloss on ex-sisting) as "about to or likely to come forth; also *simply*, coming or approaching (in time); *esp.* ready to appear or be produced when required, at one's disposal or within one's reach, 'get-at-able'. Said both of persons and things, *to keep* (a person) *forthcoming*: to keep in safe custody." The quotation is from the *OED*. The reference to temporality is

ich] within which the phenomena of the world can immediately [*ganz unmittelbar*] come to emerge without any mediation and show up as what they are. Such being-in-the-world, such an existing [*Existieren*] is the fundamental essence of each of our wholly concrete ways of behaving in relation to the things we encounter which are constituent of our nature. How else could we relate to something at all if it had not already come to be known in its meaning for us as what it is in the light [*Lichte*] of an openness [*Offenheit*] in one way or another determinate of our existence [*Dasein*], and thanks to this its essential drift [*Wesenszug*]?

Seeing this all-important fundamental relation of the essence of man to his world certainly has not the least to do with “ontological philosophizing.” Nor is it at all something that should be allowed to be based on the “ontic,” that is, on psychiatric research oriented to man’s concretely human ways of behaving, just as the inhabitant of the main floor [*Bel-Etage*] of a house should in no way be concerned about the occupant of the basement apartment. Nothing could be more upside down than such a stratified interpretation of the relation between psychiatric research and seeing the fundamental constitution of human existing as the being [*Sein*] of the “There [*Da*],” as the being [*Sein*] or sustaining [*Aushalten*] of the cleared, free openness to the world [*glichteten, freien Welt-offenheit*] that first makes the showing up [*Erscheinen*], the coming to pass [*An-Wesen*] of all phenomena possible. Rather, [293] seen in this way, in its actual essence and nature the basic constitution [*Grundverfassung*] of man pervades and sustains every single concrete healthy and pathological way of behaving.

We are made use of in this way as a listening- and understanding- enabling existing [*Existierende*] because without such a cleared sphere of openness [*Offenheitsbereich*] not a single phenomenon, not a single thing could show itself [*sich zeigen*] and be. How could there be a *phainesthai* [being brought to light], a coming to emerge [*ein Zum-Vorschein-Kommen*] without an area of brightness [*Helligkeitsbereich*]? To encourage letting oneself to the best of one’s ability be made use of as such an area of brightness for the showing up of what is available [*zu sein hat*] in the light of the meaning-illuminating possibilities of comportment given him – in this are human responsibility and obligation grounded.

To say “Yes” to this being called upon, but also to be able to refuse it, in this possibility to make a decision, man’s essential freedom is grounded.

Now every single human being fulfills his being-in-the-world in the uniquely limited form of meaning-disclosing possibilities of behaving towards what is encountering him that, in kind and number, are given only to him. This, however, does not exclude but rather

important here. Being attentive to the well-being of the other resonates well with what the therapist “is” to the other.

essentially implies that all human beings are always wholly originally in the world *together*, together lighting up the same things in a shared world, albeit also each alone in his own way.

All encounter is grounded in this wholly original, essential being-with-others [*Mitsein*], likewise all encounter in psychotherapy. In their being-with-one-another [*Miteinandersein*] with the same things in a shared world appearing in the open [*Offene*] of their existing, this essential being-with-others of all human beings, founding and enabling all encounter, sets human encountering [*Begegnen*] apart from every mere running into each other of merely extant things [*vorhandene Sachen*]. In comparison with the momentary [*augenblicklich*] world-openness of the patient, what is therapeutically effective in the therapeutic situation is the greater openness and freedom of the therapist to all spheres of the shared world showing itself. This essential being-with-others in the world makes it possible from the outset for the one who is ill [*Kranken*] to participate in the greater expansive openness and freedom of the therapist. Of course, this participation is at first still of an entirely dependent sort which leaves the responsibility for freer [294] behavior with the analyst and which can be accomplished, as it were, only through him, much as children experience life through their parents. But, unjustly, this phase of encounter is often wrongly spoken of disparagingly as transference healing. [Without justification, because such is often a step that necessarily cannot be skipped over in the independent appropriation of one's own freedom.]³⁴

Encounter in psychotherapy and its therapeutic effectiveness is just that simple. After this stressing of the essential foundation of all being-with-others, our initial warning about the dangerousness of the transference hypothesis, which degrades what is essential to something fake [*Unechtem*] and a false connection, can now perhaps be better understood. Even in the case of the most serious neurotic and the psychotic there is never something like an isolatable, detachable, and displaceable [*verschiebbaren*] affect which actually belongs elsewhere³⁵ -- a for example, with the father -- that could be transferred to the analyst. In other cases, however, it can probably happen that the world openness that constitutes the life [*Existenz*] of an ill person initially remains so masked [*verdeckt*] that it can manifest itself [*sich vollziehen*] only as a child-father relationship. But he does not transfer [*überträgt*] this. There can be no transference precisely here because one can only transfer something that one *has*. The neurotic, however, does not at all have his anxiously determined and childishly reduced capacity to act, but instead *is* it; he exists in such a narrowed down [*verengter*] way and only in such a way. It thus happens that everything that turns up in the particular light [*Lichtstrahl*] of this so narrowed down way of life [*Existenz*], even the analyst, cannot fail to light up [*aufleuchten*] in a way

34 This sentence appears only in PAP.

35 **elsewhere**: PAP reads 'wo anders hin' [some other place] instead of 'woandershin'.

corresponding in just this light, that is, with threatening paternal meaning. A relation so colored by him is no less real, however. It is with the patient himself and completely, and on this account far from being a false connection. To pass this relationship off as inauthentic [*unecht*] amounts to an unjust pathologizing [*Kränkung*] of the ill person that unnecessarily makes him ever more insecure and is in itself crazy [*irre*].

It goes without saying that a new and unusual view like the one revealed [*freigegeben*] by the analytics of existence [*Daseinsanalytik*] does not allow itself to be conveyed even half-way adequately in the few minutes I have at my disposal. The foregoing remarks can therefore only provide a few hints. The way such hints provide pointers, everyone must undertake thinking and looking for himself. The effort of such thinking and seeing on one's own is considerable. But considering the extraordinary theoretical and even greater practical significance of clarifying the usual blurriness that prevails at the basis of our psychological imagination [*Vorstellens*] and psychotherapeutic activity [*Tuns*], it is hard to avoid.

Summary³⁶

Freud was the first to recognize the "emotional" aspects of the doctor-patient relationship as the essential carrying (*ferens*) force of all therapy. His theory, however, degraded this all carrying force to something mere, not genuinely carried-over (transferred), to "transference". The inadequacy and harmfulness of this psychoanalytic theory of the doctor-patient relationship instigated more and more psychotherapists to endeavours of a more adequate understanding of the encounter in psychotherapy. Prerequisite for it is an adequate comprehension of the primary essence of human being-in the world and of the equally primary togetherness of all men. On this basis the author attempts to describe the nature and the virtue of togetherness of doctor and patient.

36 I am not certain who translated the *Zusammenfassung* (summary) Boss prepared for his publication in PAP. It may well have been Boss himself. I therefore leave it as it appears there, since the German is given along with a French *résumé*. The author/translator glosses the word 'carry' with the Latin *ferens* to point to the root of the English word 'transfer' on which the word 'transference' (which Strachey used to translate Freud's *Übertragung*) is built. The spelling of 'endeavours' may point to Boss's British orthography, or it may suggest that the editor of PAP was British. Choosing 'virtue' for 'Wirksamkeit' [effectiveness] is clearly a mistake on someone's part.

Here is Boss's summary in PAP:

Freud erkannte als erster die "gefühlsmässigen" Aspekte der Arzt-Patienten-Beziehung als das eigentlich *Tragende* aller Therapie. Seine Theorie degradierte indessen dieses alles *Tragende* zu etwas bloss unechtem Über-Getragenen, zur "Übertragung." Die Unzulänglichkeit und Schädlichkeit dieser psychoanalytischen Theorie der Arzt-Patienten-Beziehung veranlasste immer mehr Psychotherapeuten zu Versuchen eines angemesseneren Verstehens der Begegnung in der Psychotherapie. Voraussetzung hierfür ist ein adäquates Erfassen des Grundwesens des menschlichen In-der-Welt-seins schlechthin und des ebenso primären Mit-seins aller Menschen miteinander. Aufbauend auf diesem Boden wird Natur und Wirksamkeit des Miteinander-seins von Psychotherapeut und Patient darzustellen versucht.

B. Boss's Replies to Minkowski and Benedetti

{I would like to thank Professor Benedetti for the questions he has posed and for his comments on my statements. But I would like to begin with what Professor Minkowski has said, that this new research on the basis of our present-day psychotherapeutic activity is termed philosophical rumination by modern somatic therapy.³⁷ I believe that this makes no sense, since in that case it would separate the concept of therapy itself into different parts: psychology and somatics.

There are other theories that should be examined in light of the new knowledge. We have to understand the nature of the things [*oggetti*] we are examining and studying. There is, for example, a philosophy [*filosofia*] of "libido" that considers the human being as a thing in a mechanical sense. The new orientation implies a different approach, one that is not mechanical, since no mechanics [*meccanica*]³⁸ of the world can understand a thing.³⁹

And now it is clear, of course, that we always ask new questions. New questions brought me to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, of which I am not a fanatic [*fanatico*], and if I were to find more appropriate conclusions, I would follow them. For now, Heidegger's approach to the nature of man seems to me to be the most appropriate that exists, and given what Professor Minkowski has said, because his theory continues to ask and tries to formulate questions.

Professor Minkowski has spoken about affectivity [*affettività*]. If we examine this concept closely, we see that it is fundamentally an abstraction. We do not have affectivity in us; we only have a way of behaving towards specific people. Like Professor Minkowski, I also do not wish to confuse subjectivity [*soggettività*] and person [*persona*]. I have nowhere found definitions of what subjectivity and personality [*personalità*] may truly be.

37 Boss is likely referring to recent advances in pharmacotherapy that was being offered for use by psychiatrists in a big way, especially in the United States, beginning about 1960. Perhaps *somatica* would be better rendered as 'physical'. It is important to recall that psychosomatics was one of Boss's principal interests as a physician and psychiatrist. One of his first books was *Einführung in die psychosomatische Medizin [Introduction to Psychosomatic Medicine]* (Boss 1954). He returned to the topic as late as 1983. Under the influence of Heidegger, the possibility of a separation between the physical and the psychological, initiated by Descartes, was found to be insupportable. In American medical practice, there is no term corresponding to "somatics." Instead, one would speak simply about medicine and the purview of the physician.) Toronto Press, 1961 of Psychotherapyion was bipolar mood disorders.

38 Boss's reference appears to be to mechanics as one of the classic branches of Newtonian physics.

39 Here, again, Heidegger's thought is clearly in the background of Boss's existential analysis. See, for example, *Die Frage nach dem Ding [The Question Concerning the Thing. On Kant's Doctrine of the Transcendental Principles]*, first published in 1962 (Heidegger 1967) but based on a course given in 1935-36, and Heidegger's essay "Das Ding [The Thing]" (1949), first published in 1951 (Heidegger 2012).

I now come to what Professor Benedetti has said. He spoke a great deal about the concept of transference, considering the concept differently than Freud did. But why did Freud call this phenomenon transference? Because he was thinking of the transference of a semblance—for instance, the feelings that one felt towards his father or mother that spill over into the analyst. As I have already said, there are, for example, no isolatable feelings. There is in a very vague sense a transfer [*trasferimento*] and this means an equivalent way of behaving in relation to various things. If we always consider a human being only as a non-isolatable “I”, we have another meaning of transference, since in that case it is only possible to reduce it to infantile behavior.

I do not really understand what is meant by an “operational” concept [*concetto “operazionale”*]. I believe that concepts not meaning what they were originally intended to mean only leads to confusion or mistakes. For instance, we speak of the concept of the psychic as an abstraction, we think of an ideological [*ideologica*] abstraction, but at the same time we do not think of this with precision; and therefore in order to avoid confusion it is better not to speak of it in this way. The same thing applies to polarity [*polarità*].⁴⁰ We therefore speak about transference phenomena only in describing certain ways of behaving and stick to this definition. The essential thing is (and here I am in agreement with Benedetti) that we must try to show the patient what his manner of behaving is related to. If you interpret the essence of a human being as a set of possible behaviors, it is very important to know how to say to which possible behaviors towards us “normal persons” he may hold fast. This is our patient’s field of freedom, what Freud called the “analysis of existence [*analisi dell’esistenza*].”⁴¹

As for other things with which I am in agreement, there is, for example, this very important point: Freud spoke about a type of transference that he called “acting out [*agito*],” and this was interpreted primarily as resistance. For me this is a dangerous misunderstanding. He says that this acting-out transference is a type of resistance of the patient in relation to certain memories. In many cases of the seriously ill, this “acting [*agire*]”

40 Boss is referring to comments made by Minkowski’s in response to Boss (Migone (2017), 281-282), in which Minkowski claims that polarity can usefully be given an operational definition, as when psychiatrists speak of affect in terms of bipolar mood disorders. He borrows a concept from physics when talking about matters human, Boss notes, but this is unacceptable. Minkowski also suggests that transference can be operationally defined in psychiatry without reverting to a natural scientific mind set, adding that one can do that much as one can speak of layers of the psyche as in Freud’s topographic model without thinking geologically. Minkowski contrasted “operational [*operazionale*] concepts” with “topical [*topico*] concepts,” that is, concepts used in the setting (*topos*) in which their meaning was formed. Boss claims that confusion arises when concepts borrowed from the natural sciences are applied to the human being. As a result, for example, human encounter can then be treated abstractly as transference rather than as a concrete encounter between two human beings.

41 It has not been possible to determine whether Boss was quoting Freud directly here.

certainly does not lead to memories, as Freud says. It cannot be about memories, but is often about new phenomena that lead to a new way of behaving.

I would also like to say more about “closeness [*vicinanza*]” and “distance [*distanza*]” in psychotherapy. I do not believe that one can make a distinction of this type; in other words, that the doctor must shut himself off from the closeness of a friend or relative. I think the psychotherapist must always be very close [*vicino*] to the analysand; however, there are a thousand kinds of closeness. There is the forced closeness of dependency and submission. There is the closeness created by falling in love, and this is a kind of closeness that should be examined in depth by the analyst. There is, for example, the closeness of a free relationship, of an open freedom with respect to the analyst, in which he is extremely close to the analysand. However, despite this closeness, the analyst must retain his own personality and freedom.

Freud considered transference to be the place in which the patient must be able to show all kinds of behavior which until then he could not show, but this requires a certain degree of closeness that demands a high degree of humanity.}

Concluding Remarks

I now leave it to the reader to take what Boss has said and consider further the unique element of encounter found in every clinical relationship and the degree to which the efficacy of psychotherapy may be judged on the basis of the features of this element. Thoughtful consideration of the credibility of the phenomenon of transference in general in psychotherapy is also indicated. As increasingly the mode of action and value of psychotherapy are compared to and contrasted with the efficacy of the use of psychotropic medications alone or in combination with psychotherapy, attention to the element of encounter in psychotherapy is both inevitable and necessary.

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