

Introduction to EAGT's Winter 2020 newsletter

Here we go again! I am happy to introduce you with a few lines to our Winter 2020 newsletter.



To commence, I join Wilma's words that open her report: *"I hope you're healthy and well! This is one of the most written sentences in my email exchanges with you in 2020. Yet these are not mere words of politeness but are very sincere."* Reading through the reports of our different committees, I strongly sense the push to connect, to express, to give signs of life. *"Too much confluence in the family, too little contact outside the family"*, writes Jack-our-treasurer. Unlike previously, most editors of reports share personal

and professional moments, concerns, aporia experienced in this singular worldwide context, before going into their report *stricto sensu*. Our environment on a world scale leads "befores" to an end, sometimes in most dramatic circumstances; it also contains the seeds of creative adjustment for "nexts". *"With the passage of times, as we establish a new routine and acknowledge this new style of living in total solitude as our new reality, the horizon gets wider and I notice more and more issues that need to be addressed, re-evaluated, discussed with colleagues, in order to adjust to the new circumstances"*, writes Nurith for the Training Standards Committee. The GPO committee works on a project to *"offer a series of free webinars on specific topics to our GPO community and others."* Etc – I cannot quote all, and simply and wholeheartedly invite you to read the different reports of our committees, as they are particularly and intensely rich and witnessing of experiences of this epoch.

As it has been the case for some editions now, this Winter's newsletter also and again embeds contributions our newsletter team (a special thought and affection here to

my mates Cristina Comanac, Alessandra Merizzi and Michele Cannavo) has gone fishing for and that come out to be little extras and treats to savour and meditate on.

Steffi Badnarek kindly accepted to sum up in an article her contribution to this year's Annual British Gestalt Journal Day on the theme of "*Necessary derangement – living and working in a changing field*". Her paper ends with an essential: "So, what is the role of psychotherapy in a time of derangement? Before we can even begin to guide others, we may need to get to know the terrain and this may well entail a willingness to be undone ourselves. Where are the spaces that offer the necessary steps into this derangement?".

In memoriam of Prof. Shraga Serok, Nurith Levi pays tribute to his contribution to the Field of Israeli Psychotherapy Shraga "*where he is considered the pioneer who introduced Gestalt to clinical and academic institutions*", as well as to the private person he was.

Astrid's Interview hosts in this edition our colleague Mônica Botelho Alvim, gestalt-therapist and professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

And my "*Chatting with...*" section welcomes this time the two founders of the Humans of Gestalt project, Heather Anne Keyes and Kamila Bialy, who offer us backstage access to this incredibly creative project of connectedness.

... and much more to read, pencil in, discover, let infuse, in this newsletter.

But, last and not least, I would like to set a special focus on the contributions of some core persons.

You have no time to read our whole issue? Then do start by reading their contributions. Why? Because without their smooth taking care of the bits and parts that make the whole engine of our association run, we wouldn't be connected as we are, here and in our association's day-to-day life.

Wilma Trip, our office manager, shares in a synthetic report her activities, recalls the main points on the task list at the moment, and the essential team she forms with her colleagues Thomas Reistad and Eveline Boelens. You don't know Eveline? Normal, she joined in recently and shares some words on herself in this newsletter, also.

Thomas Reistad takes time to introduce us to the Backoffice wheelwork – and you probably cannot imagine how complex its mechanics are. In "With love from the engine room", we ALL are invited to carefully read how things can work fluidly – or not.

I have it at heart to support getting the nail in by sharing an excerpt of the values, engagement and spirit of these persons: "*So, to sum, why are we nagging about this? Because this is the worst part of working in Backoffice in EAGT. We in Backoffice*

really try to remain personal in our tones and approach wherever possible. We try to be friendly and kind, and we try to show how much we like the members and EAGT as an organization in our communication with the members. But then it's not so easy to stay in love and be friendly... when, as we perceive it, we are rejected and overseen."

To finish this Intro, again I join Wilma's words that finish her report: *"I'd like to end with the astronomic Christmas miracle which is about to happen around December 21st. At this date the solar systems of Jupiter and Saturn will have the shape of what will look like a double planet with the name "Christmas star". Last time this happened was 800 years ago. " Take care, stay safe and alive,*

Astrid Dusendschön, December 2020.

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Letter from the President

I hope that you and your loved ones have stayed healthy in the last few months. I often thought about our whole community in those difficult moments. This year is a special year. In many ways. Each of us can tell a story, a story of change.

Let me also share with you my personal experience. During the pandemic I had to take care of my parents' house as it needs a lot of adaptation due to their developing disabilities. In the mid of the first wave of corona we ended by leaving Warsaw for few months and starting some construction work on our own. As you can imagine there were no specialist available and my husband became mason, tailer, carpenter and I fully qualified planner, carrier and cook.

At the same time corona times covered my transition in the EAGT. I would like to thank all my colleagues from the EC and all other committees and the back office for their time, energy and openness to embrace the new. One day I realized that this turn of the EAGT presidency may be the first online presidency! What a new experience – for me and for all of us! I must admit that still it is strange not to be able to meet soon, not to be able to welcome Monika and David, all new committees' members and our new colleague Evelien in person and to farewell the one who finished their terms, especially Beatrix and Michele without a big hug. I am sure that we all are relying on the previous experiences, on previous personal meetings. I am so proud of our organization – together we had built a solid ground and now it is holding us.



While reflecting, it came to me that we are in the liminal time. When we cannot go back to where we were. It means that many of us were affected by corona virus. This is an extraordinary time, where many people suffer. The liminal time feels like a crisis. The crisis brings questions. One way to embrace it is to evoke curiosity and look for inspiration. Let us have a look at calligraphy.

Mandarin pictogram describing suffering is so inspiring! The Chinese word for crisis is combined of two signs, one meaning “danger” and the other meaning “opportunity”.

We can go out and may catch the danger. We never had before such collective experience. Never were we able to get the information form around the world so quickly. The dreams we had, what happened to them?

Opportunity is important too. We can take the perspective that this is the time for us to become what we are meant to be. It's also important to remember that the second character "ji" depends on the context in which is inserted may acquire different meanings like "insightful (insight); ingenious".

Let's join me in the thinking of how to engage. What is the nature of the revolution in us, in our families, in our communities? As therapists we are privileged that we can do our work online! Something is missing but something has been added too. Now many ways of responding are more spontaneous. We can speak to people all over our countries, Europe and beyond. We can learn more, reach more people. Being therapists, we are also privileged to watch people grow, we help the people we work with to turn into what they are meant to be. Its liminal time for them too.

After months of difficulties, sometimes long isolation, we may notice that the social media is a rabbit hole. Maybe now is a point to say "enough"? If I could learn something new what would it be? We may want to sit with the question. We may want to start the circle or joining the circle – the more people do it the more wisdom, capacity and compassion are flourishing. One thing I learned is that once the Other is less projected, we start to ask question what has been projected. If we can get peers, others and be honest the awareness is growing. Kindness is emerging.

With these thoughts I close for now. I wish you a joyful and healthy holiday season and am looking forward to seeing many of you at our March meetings online, With warm wishes

Renata Mizerska

President

Report from treasurer



It is the 1st of December as I write this. What a year it is / was!

After the first wave of COVID-19- stress, ill colleagues, old family members dying and lockdowns we wanted to have some relief. So, we travelled this summer within the national borders of the Netherlands, because traveling abroad ... well, you know.

We did not want to go into an airplane, or train or bus when we could avoid it. Familiar? We went by bike over the dykes of the nearby river.

Practice resumed, and the demand for couple therapy was booming. Staying close and working from home sometimes with demanding children around you is a relational test. Too much confluence in the family, too little contact outside the family. I read the book “Keep distance, touch me” (in Dutch) by the Belgium psycho-analyst Paul Verhaeghe. As the title suggests, about the two opposing needs of seeking comfort in proximity and

keeping distance to feel safe. And “The plague” by Albert Camus. Both books gave words to some of my feelings and experiences.

Nurses in my practice, emotionally exhausted, sometime traumatised. They worked so hard. Working online, day by day, did something for me too. The feeling that the art of gestalt has shrunken from whole bodies and persons to screens with heads and shoulders. Like everybody we as therapists need to work to keep ourselves healthy in this sickening field. The ease in which leaders and politicians embrace strong measures to contain civilians in their right place. COVID is also a challenge for democracy. Also in the EAGT. Because our online GGM was our solution for democracy, the best we could create at that moment. But distance makes it more difficult to build up trust, in general. Bonding needs skin-contact, isn't that true?



My emotional bond with screens is growing but still not satisfying. Hi to my mum and dad (89 and 92), luckily, they learned to handle an iPad.

We had to wave out Beatrix, my beloved chair and teammate in the EC, and Michele with his wit and brightness in his eyes and photo's. We welcomed Monika Siedlak-Peçzek and David Pico Vila in the EC and Renata in her new position.

And because of all the work for re-registrations and registrations we could employ an extra staff member next to Wilma: Eveline Boelens works 8 hours per week to get it done. Together with Monika Siedlak-Peçzek, Ien van Duijnhoven and Nurith Levi.

And the finances? That is quite stable. Less expenses for travelling and meeting rooms in September, but more costs for IT support. And EAGT wanted to support the colleagues in Belarus with the Human Rights project, but of course it could not happen for safety reasons and travel difficulties. This is happening with other projects too. So that means we could do some extra projects when there are enough volunteers available! Please contact Joanna Kato or someone else of the HR & SR committee.



There is still some work to do on the topic of scholarships (no or yes, but how?), until that discussion is worked out scholarships are on hold. And there is some work to do about our fee- structure for membership, accreditations, re-accreditations and so on. It is very differentiated with 23 different fees. Like leaves on a little shrub in the garden

Jack van Liesdonk

Treasurer and vice-president

REPORT FROM TRAINING STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Dear Colleagues,

Winter is here again. My calendar says so. The bare trees and grey skies agree.

The frenetic efforts of the Web's shopping Empires, on the eve of the High Holidays also carry the Gospel –

December the first, 2019 is officially the first day of the new count, Time of the Corona.

To me it feels like time has stopped somewhere round last March – and at other times I feel as though ages have pass since it all started...

My life cycle was somehow tempered with...



Hey kids! Time to goback to school!

Undoubtedly, for me the most significant lesson of this challenging time is the reaffirmation of how inter-dependent this universe is.

How fragile the fabric of human life is, and how resilient, brave and resourceful at the same time.

How mankind and environment are one, mutually affecting and being affected... not really news, for Gestalt people.

I am also deeply aware of the fact that the world that we knew till the eve of 2020 - will never be the same again, for better or worse.

The global shut down called for creative adjustment in its deepest meaning: Many new ideas, inventions, and initiatives, some of which may have been "brewing" humbly in the minds of people –emerged from the field and came to life in the new aera.

Each of us is witness to the modifications that are gradually (or abruptly) penetrating our perceptions of roles in the various circles of our lives, of the way we chose and shape our priorities and of the way we proceed (or not) with our previously taken-for-granted relations, activities, values...

It seems we have much to learn from our children: most of them usually meet any novelty with curiosity and excitement, and their ability for creative adjustment is generally fast and vast. All they need is a general message of trust and support and they will make the best out of the new situation mostly enjoying the change itself.

Naturally, The Time of Corona had its impact also on the life of the Training Standards Committee: The plans and assignments that we have shared at the beginning of 2020 – had to be frozen and our activity was badly hindered dew to circumstances. It was (and still is) impossible to commit to future dates. Physical and mental availability of staff in institutes and of TSC members is limited, as family and health conditions come to the foreground.

New accreditations which require actual visits of institutes had to be delayed, re-accreditations were hardly performed, and we attend to urgent matters only.

At present, with things slowly settling in most countries, we are hopeful that our regular work will be resumed, or we will have to consider new, adjustable ways to carry it out. One way, which most institutes have already adopted, is diverting certain parts of the training to E-learning. Please see our recommendations for E-Training and E-Supervision, which is supported by the EEC Document (to be voted in our next GMM meeting in Madrid, September 2021).

For other aspects of training, accreditation and re-accreditation in Corona times please see our suggestions 8 and 9 of the EEC document.

* * *

With such a liquid reality surrounding us, it seems important to reconfirming that which is solid in our common ground. I therefore take the opportunity to refresh some background information, concerning the role of TSC in general, and the prudence of accreditations in particular.

As EAGT grew from a small, intimate group of colleagues who enjoyed the friendly assembly not less than the professional exchange – into a large organization (over 1500 members...) which is regulated by our self-imposed Statutes, by-laws and Code of Ethics – we have certainly lost some of the spontaneity and elasticity that characterized the young, good-old days.

Gestalt people are, by definition, hardly the most compliant individuals. Imposing "standards" –seems a juxtaposition to our natural way of doing things. However, very early in the history of EAGT it became clear to our founders that only by obliging to formal Training Standards for Gestalt Therapists, would the thriving of our modality be affirmed and established, and we could expect to become a recognized modality, which will allow Gestalt therapists to work throughout Europe. I wasn't there when it happened, yet I can imagine a vehement discussion which ended by the majority accepting - if under protest - (minimal) Training Standards which would regulate our programs and would, at the same time, serve as trade- mark of quality.

As you certainly know from your personal experience, we don't regard our standards as sacred or eternal. They are being revised periodically, in order to keep them relevant and representing the ongoing developments in the field. Every member and every institute are welcome to suggest any change, which would be brought before and voted by our GMM. Such a suggestion needs to be well grounded and formulated in operational terms. Changes would only be accepted when the majority of members supports them. In other words, introducing alternations to the Training Standards is not the committee's mandate, rather it is our shared responsibility as a professional community.

Being a member-led organization, we have also agreed, at a certain point in time, to join the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) – which means that collegial treaty is now obligating also by virtue of the contract with other modalities. EAGT's Training Standards need to be similar, inline –not identical - yet reasonably consensual with the general State of the Art of Psychotherapy.

We have a very good professional reputation in the EAP (apart from being the modality with the largest number of representing institutes...). We are lately active members in all the fields of EAP's activity, in part thanks to our clear, transparent, and stable adhering to agreed standards.

EAP is currently trying to change the structure of psychotherapy training in general, to make it more adjunct to academic institutes, to highlight theoretical studies and research on the account of practicum and the clinical hours, (not to mention supervision and personal therapy). We stand alert to the effort of preserving our concept of training, nevertheless, we would have to find the appropriate modifications if we strive to remain members of the growing community of psychotherapists.

This information I share with you, dear colleagues, in order to offer you an over-all understanding of the TSC role and of the obliging meaning of our Training Standards. We don't make the rules – we are the gate keepers. You chose us to ascertain that an accredited member can demonstrate certain competencies and certain theoretical knowledge and Ethical standards, which enables one to render responsible, effective psychotherapy, rooted in Gestalt Therapy principle.

We strive to ensure that an accredited supervisor is fostering a trainee in the critical course of training, rendering the right blend of support and challenge, encouragement and self-reflection which is expected from an excelling professional therapist.

We also make any effort to see to it that an Accredited Institute stands for Ethical conduct of all its members, responsibility for a thorough, wide, comprehensive theoretical and clinical training, which is carried out by accredited, experienced trainers, supervisors and therapists, who certify trainees only once they have completed all the of the program's requirements in a satisfactory way.

We rely on these standards to represent us as a community, and we need to guarantee them so the public can trust us. Needless to say, it is in the best interest of all concerned parties that we make sure that our standards are respected by our own members. When there are difficulties, clash of interests, Ethical dilemma, etc. – we expose them and look together for solutions.

TSC is always open for dialogue, consultation and support for individual members and representatives of institutes. We work with you at any stage of your professional career, we learn from your questions and critical comments, and we enjoy accompanying institutes in their earliest stages of development, trying to prevent regrettable mistakes before they occur.

We welcome your making contact and respond to any communication.

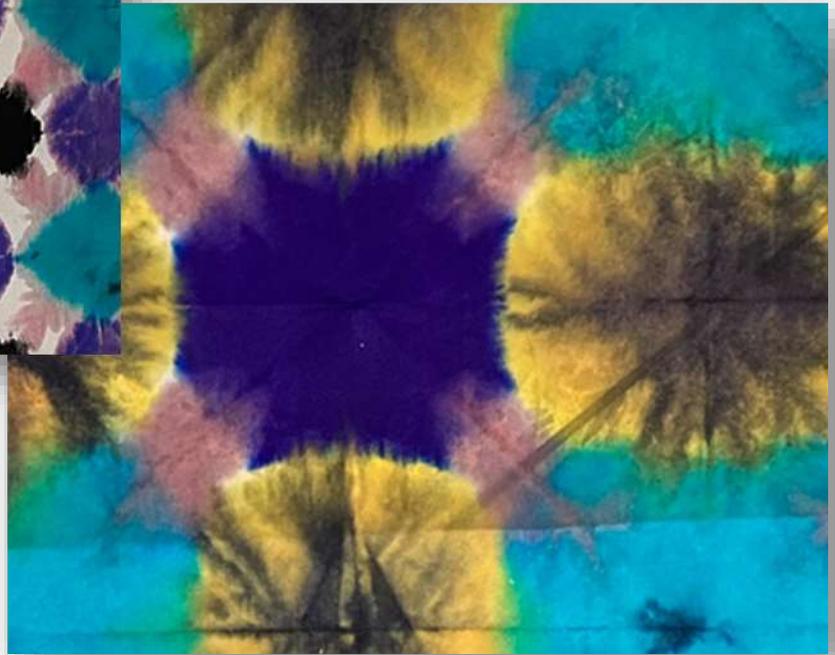
We wish you a good, health New Year,

Take care, Stay safe

Nurith,

Chair, TSC

Zoom Workshop: Combination of watercolors boutique and Origami/ Aviv Levi



GPO and the “VUCA” environment

2020 has been a tough year for most of us and within the GPO community we often refer to it as having characterized a “VUCA” environment; VUCA being a fashionable management acronym referring to “volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous”. It is a short way of saying “the world has gone crazy” and we can no longer plan or predict what might happen. As we have said in previous newsletters, we have worked hard to stay connected in our practice community through webinars, calls and newsletters, and to support each other as best we can.

In our practice, we believe that the Contemporary Gestalt approach to Organisational Change, Leadership, Community Organising and Coaching is totally in tune with working in these VUCA conditions. In this newsletter we will take the opportunity to say why we believe this as well as update about what the GPO committee and Lead Mentors in different countries have been doing.

"The GPO committee are very grateful to Michele Cannavo for permission to use his outstanding photograph as an accompaniment to this article"



Michele Cannavo

Contemporary Organisational Gestalt aims to strike a balance between delivering strategically aimed interventions and responding to what is emerging in particular situations, (client organisations, teams, communities and systems). The combination of these skills is exactly what a VUCA environment calls for. As GPOs, we are trained to be aware of complex interconnections between different parts of a system and know that changing one aspect affects the whole body of the organisation, (be that an individual we are coaching or a large corporation). As these ripples of connection are experienced in the whole, we expect the system to become more volatile, mobilised and open to unexpected events. Our focus on process not content means that we are not surprised by this ambiguity and in the face of the uncertainty that is created, can chose to experiment. The Creative, spontaneous experiment that works with energy created by volatile conditions is one of the main methods for intervening in the Gestalt approach and it is this skill set that helps us work in these challenging times.

We have also been enjoying being more experimental in the way we work inside EAGT in the GPO committee and have reached out to Lead Mentors in a number of countries to come together and create projects and different partnerships to see what might emerge. In that spirit we are continuing to look at our GPO Handbook and Ethical Code; exploring whether we are strong enough in supporting diverse groups at work, rigorous enough in getting “informed consent”, (especially in team interventions), and accessible enough to people who would like to become Accredited as a GPO or engage the services of an Accredited GPO. We are therefore reviewing our materials with wonderful support from Wilma and Thomas in Back Office, (paper and electronic), starting our virtual viva processes in December, expanding GPO training options and increasing our pool of recognised mentors.

In 2021 we hope to offer a series of free webinars on specific topics to our GPO community and others. We are also exploring possible Fast track pathways from Accreditation as a GPO to professional registration as a coach at PCC level with ICF, (International Coach Federation). The GPO committee have explored these options previously as we recognise the importance of this to some of our coach members. We hope to have an initial small group of EAGT-GPOs from across Europe undertake an initial scoping in 2021 and will keep the community updated via newsletter and the Facebook page.

Sally Denham-Vaughan, Chair GPO Committee

Report from Ethics Committee

After taking some deep breaths in the summer, we are back in Lockdowns again. We really missed the possibility of seeing each other personally, enjoying joint meals and dancing together. And we really appreciate all the work done by EC, the office and other bodies of EAGT to continue our work and organizing the General Board meeting and GMM online.

In the EEC we enjoyed being in contact, recognising the national differences in dealing with the Pandemic and restrictions.

Apart from that, we were really occupied by how to react to emails accusing persons, institutes and gestalt therapy in general. A lot of discussion was needed to figure out where is the responsibility of EEC, or other bodies of EAGT and the whole organisation.

It was a good experience to work together with EC and the Complaint committee in this process of clarifying and developing a position and an answer to these requests. Apart from that we did our normal accreditation and reaccreditation work.

We are looking forward to meeting again.

Veronica Klingemann , Chair of Ethic Committee

Report NOGT and external relations officer

“I don’t know what to report about for the autumn newsletter! I’ve been the NOGT Officer for two months only...” “Introduce yourself”, Sally and other EC colleagues suggest. Thanks, good idea! Here I go.

Hola! My name is David Picó Vila. I’m from Valencia, Spain. I was elected the new NOGT and External Relations Officer in our last GMM in September, after Renata left this position and became the EAGT President. I’m still getting used to it and learning what it means. The EC team and Wilma couldn’t have been more generous and open in welcoming me in and helping me orient myself in EAGT. Their support is precious.

My duties have to do, on the one hand, with NOGTs and professional associations within EAGT. There is an unusual lot of activity on that front right now. We have quite a few accreditation and reaccreditation processes going on. Procedures and forms are being reviewed, as part of the impressive effort Wilma and Thomas are doing for making the back-office work more efficient and well structured. They created a new institutional email address for me (david.pico@eagt.org) that any member can use to reach me. Please use it if I can be of any help!

On the other hand, I attended my first EAP (European Association of Psychotherapy) meetings –which took place in October in the pintoresque city of Zoom– together with Renata and Jack. I’m barely starting to understand the complexity of relationships, values, interests, power balances, strategies, and so on, that converge in that melting pot. I can see that we –gestalt therapists– need to have a voice in that forum that is listened to. I’m learning about EU accreditation policies, research efforts, specificities of the different countries, relationships with universities and other institutions, and so on. A lot to learn, and a lot to take into account for helping gestalt therapy be in the place it must be in that scene.

On a more personal level, autumn 2020 has been extremely busy for me. The second wave of the pandemic in Spain was very strong. The political situation here is pretty tense. People are nervous and suffer. Therapists, including myself, are having a tsunami of stressed clients in our offices. The combination pandemic + internet has opened –or forced, sometimes– new possibilities for therapy, supervision and training, for reaching people and colleagues we would not usually reach. I’m being very active in that area. This is exciting and stressing at the same time. All this, together with becoming more

active in EAGT, is significantly changing how I feel connected to the world. The gestalt world, but not only. This is where I am.

David Picó Vila, NOGT and External Relations Officer

Report from Secretary of the Executive Committee

I am in such an unusual position that I started working in a team and have very little direct contact with people who I would like to meet in person. How do I start? Whom to call? Who to ask? Or maybe the information is somewhere in the documents and I just need to find it? I would prefer to sit down together, talk, look into your faces, exchange smiles and then deal with the documents... We are though in different countries and places; we meet on Teams and talk via WhatsApp or Outlook.

As one of my tasks as EAGT Secretary is to accept documents from people who apply to join our community, this will be a permanent feature of my experience: many long-distance contacts, mostly via email. I will contact many people, be acquainted with their rich experience, having hope that maybe one day we meet face to face and get to know each other better ... maybe in Spain? On the conference.

Before we meet in person, however, a few words about me. My name is Monika Siedlak-Pęczek. I am from Warsaw, Poland. I have been the Secretary of the PTPG - Polish NOGT and due to Covid-19 my office responsibilities there are still in the closing phase. I close important matters and pass along others. At the same time, this year in September I have started my work at EAGT as Secretary. Everything here is new for me: documents, processes, even the scale. I obtain a lot of support from Wilma, Evelin and Ien who are much help in reviewing and approving documents that have accumulated over the months. Nurith and Renata support me with their experience and help to identify what is most important now. Thank you for introducing me to work in the EC team - your kindness, openness and energy are a great support for me.

Thomas supports us technically and I think that without him all the office work would not be possible. He recently calculated that we could expect applications sent by several hundred people a year for our approval!

Yes, I am lost at times, but fortunately, more often I think - "I can do it!"

Monika Siedlak-Pęczek Secretary of the Executive Committee

Report from office manager

Dear members!

I hope you're healthy and well! This is one of the most written sentences in my email exchanges with you in 2020. Yet these are not mere words of politeness but are very sincere.

Although 2020 was a tough year it passed quickly. This year there were many changes in the work in the office. As a good working team Thomas and I worked together on refining the membership data base. A lot is now done from this database. This brings me to one of the latest adjustments: uploading application forms for individual members via a link on our website. Next year we will expand this possibility and changes will be implemented.

One of our challenges this year was the organizing of all online meetings in EC, GB and our General Meeting of Members. It was a very exciting and demanding project. For the GMM we had a working group of 3 people, Ien van Duynhoven, Thomas and me arranging all necessary preparations concerning the voting part. I think we can conclude that our efforts and dedication were appreciated. Online meetings are now more or less accepted as the new normal, but it cannot replace meeting in person!

One of the projects this year was inviting those individual members, GPO's, Training Institutes and NOGT's who needed to do a re-registration to complete the process. It is a big project, and it is in addition to the "normal" applications we receive. As this year is nearly over, I would like to ask all members who have so far forgotten to send the documents for re-registration to use the link and upload the documents before 2021 starts. You can read more about re-registration in the report written by Thomas.

Luckily, the Executive Committee decided that an extra person in the office was necessary to help with all the re-registrations. Her name is Eveline Boelens and some of you have already received a response directly from her. She signed a temporary contract. In the first weeks Eveline and I met many hours to explain how this process works and what her task is. She is doing very well and is a quick learner. You can read a short introduction to Eveline in this Newsletter.

Furthermore, you can read a comprehensive article from the "Engine room" about an aspect of the sometimes, daily struggle we experience in back office and a mini course on how to work together more effectively when writing documents.



I'd like to end with the astronomic Christmas miracle which is about to happen around December 21st. At this date the solar systems of Jupiter and Saturn will have the shape of what will look like a double planet with the name "Christmas star". Last time this happened was 800 years ago.

I wish you a healthy 2021!

Wilma

With Love from the engine room

Sending email to Backoffice.

Backoffice now is more than one person. But you can always reach us at one email address.

INFO@EAGT.ORG is our common address. It will be read, so please do not send to all of us... sending 3 copies of same email... is just delaying response.



Our invoices are sent from PayPal, they use service@paypal.nl .

Then there is OUR service addresses service@eagt.org , pp@eagt.org and pp2@eagt.org .

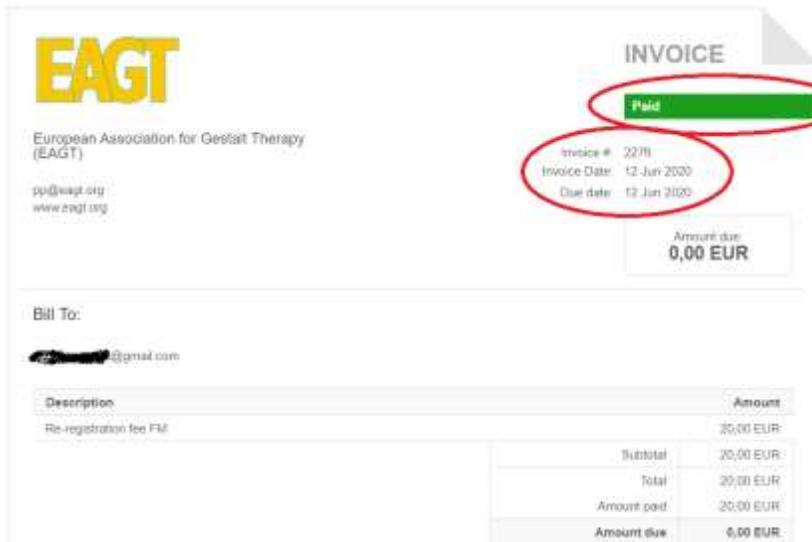
service@eagt.org is a robot attaching your files when you upload them.

pp@eagt.org and pp2@eagt.org sends you all the reminders on invoices.

All the robots are administered by admin@eagt.org , so, if any of the above sends you messages you do not understand ... contact admin.

Do not hesitate to ask.

Invoices



EAGT uses PayPal as its invoicing system. a new member, when approved after registering, is given a unique recurring agreement in PayPal.

An invoice is sent from service@paypal.nl. it includes a link to the invoice. The link looks something like this: <https://www.paypal.com/invoice/p/#5HYEDFFFZATV2EPG> (This link is just an example).

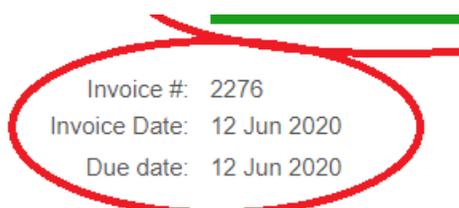
The invoice is send every year, on the day your first invoice was registered, so somebody gets the invoice in January, some in May, but most get them in March.

The Invoice have a status, in this case it is green and paid, it has an Invoice # (number) of 2276 , and a due date.

If you pay online with a master or visa card, you will see that an unpaid invoice at once changes to paid. Therefore, PLEASE do not inform us that you have paid online. We know.

You do not need to pay online, therefore every invoice also includes bank details you can use. If you pay by bank, status is not at once updated. Once a month we transfer payments to PayPal, around the 3de of the month, and then status will change to green. But if you pay the 29th, due to delay in the bank, it might stay as unpaid...

Pay by bank, you pay the fee... Pay by PayPal , we handle the fee.



The Invoice # and Due dates are important. If you would like to communicate with us about an invoice... PLEASE do not refer to it as “my invoice”. PLEASE use the Invoice Number.

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And, of course, due date is due date, please pay when receiving invoice.

And... we know... Sometimes life sends you a curve ball... But then CONTACT US!!



If you pay by bank, PLEASE INCLUDE THE PAYPAL INVOICE NUMBER

<p>What we see in the bank statement</p>	
<p>/TRTP/SEPA OVERBOEKING/IBAN/PL45116022020000200182333 767/BIC /BIGBPLPW/NAME/JASKA MANNA/REMI/annual payment 2020 JASKA MANNA /EREF/NOTPROVIDED</p>	<p>If you do not include reference, ITS OF COURSE NICE TO KNOW YOUR NAME, but we then must look you up by name, then find invoice, and yes that takes time</p>
<p>/TRTP/SEPA OVERBOEKING/IBAN/BE2134496447395203/BIC/CT BKBEBXXX /NAME/ JASKA MANNA /REMI/GPO REGISTRATION FEE Invoice no 2552 jaska.mann(at)telenet.be /EREF/VZ03163GPJKZUZ01</p>	<p>This is a perfect example on how we like it and a little more.</p>

So, to sum, why are we nagging about this?



Because this is the worst part of working in Backoffice in EAGT. We in Backoffice really try to remain personal in our tones and approach wherever possible. We try to be friendly and kind, and we try to show how much we like the members and EAGT as an organization in our communication with the members. But then it's not so easy to stay in love and be friendly... when, as we perceive it, are rejected and overseen.

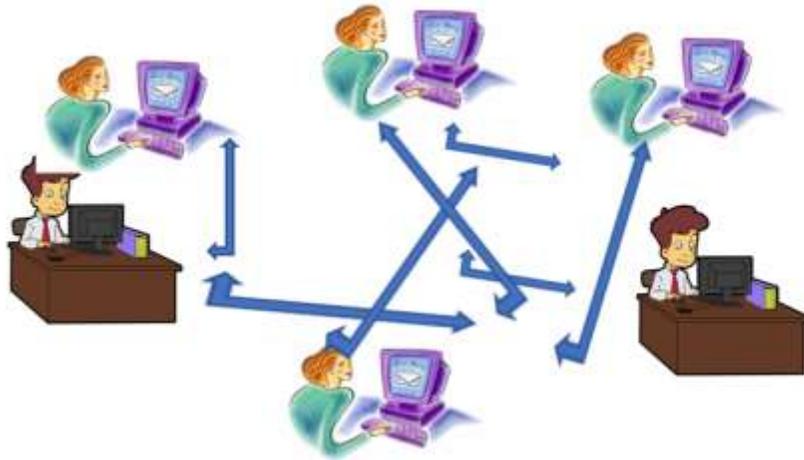
But if you get a response, a telephone call, or an email, and have coffee in the mug, life is sweet, and we can manage to find solutions. And if you feel that it's difficult to communicate with us in a language that you don't master... we are using Google translate all the time... BUT Respond.

How to work together on documents

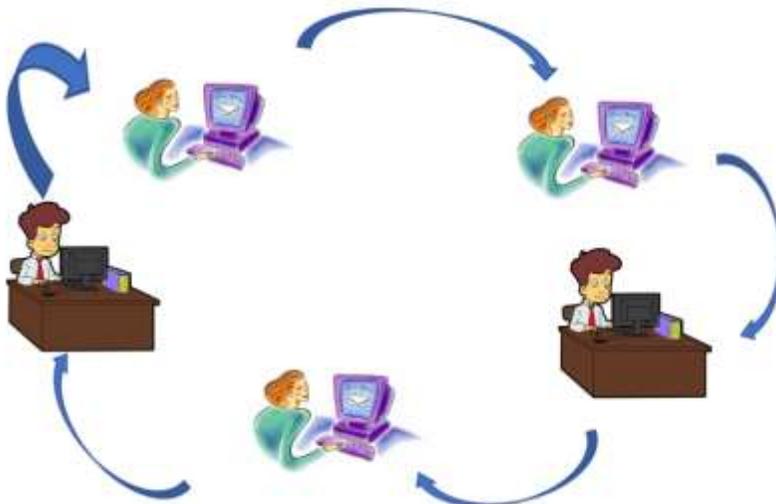
Is there more than one way? Can it be done differently from what we do today?

OHHH YES it can.

Method 1. The total chaos!

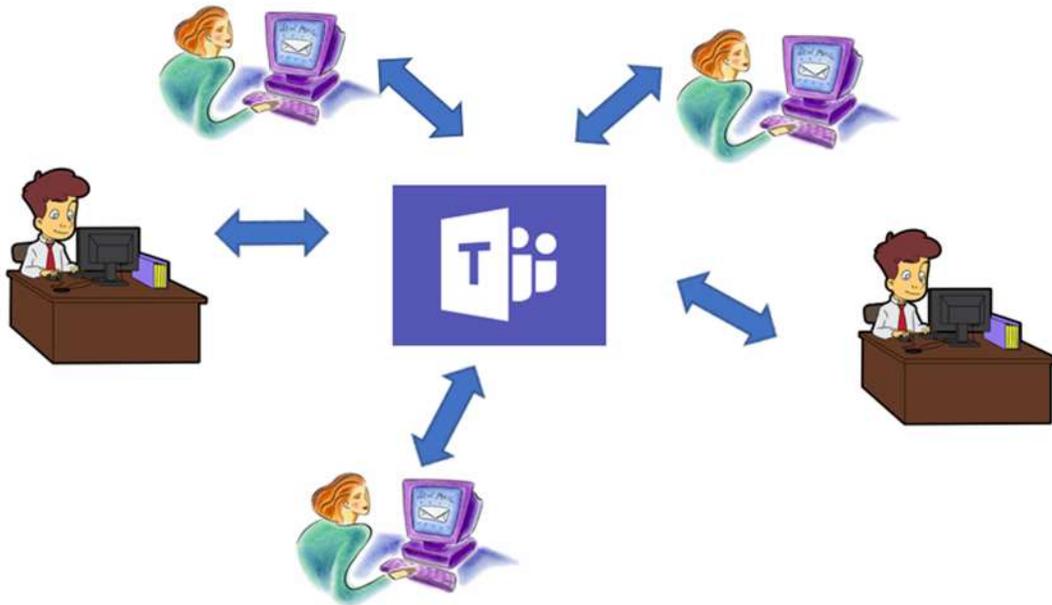


One person sends one email to all people involved. Each person replies to all involved, that they have some comments, often comments are the same, then they respond that they like the comments from the other persons, but ... This can go back and forth for quite a long time. And in the end, somebody has to read all emails, and try to compile the final version, that again are send to all for approval...



Method 2. Round Robin

Method 3. Using Teams



The document is stored in SharePoint TEAM site. EVERYBODY can go in and edit at the same time. Write comments, write changes. Two people or more can go in at the same time or people can go in when it suits them. No expensive licenses are needed since everybody can use web client of Word. No confusion between older and newer versions of word. No Mac versus PC, dot versus Doc and DOCX problems.

So why not spend a little time to learn how to do it, and save hours in the future, each time you need to work together.

Welcome to new assistant in the Backoffice!



How to Introduce myself...

My name is Eveline and I am the new assistant in the Backoffice.

Living in Stadskanaal, The Netherlands, in the past living next door to Wilma.

I am 53 years old, married with Laurens and mother of 2 daughters Valesca and Adrienne.

The kids are not living at home anymore (no empty nest syndrome) and the dog is getting old.

So, I have some spare time. Next to my 24 hours of work as a receptionist I'm working for EAGT for at least 8 hours a week. In the past 25 years I was a volunteer at the local hockey club in several functions, and even in my daily work, always being busy with members and numbers.

My focus is to work hard on the Re-registrations of individual members. In the past month everyone who paid their Re-registration fee, received a personal mail with a link to upload the re-registration form and other necessary documents and certificates.

Happy Holidays for everyone and stay safe!

Eveline



Invitation to the 5th International Gestalt therapy Research Conference

Dear colleagues,

We are inviting you all to the 5th International Conference on Research in Gestalt Therapy which will be held in Hamburg, Germany, the 24-25-26 of September 2021

<https://research-conference-hamburg2021.com/>

There you can be part of a lot of workshops, lectures and keynote speeches, held by international gestalt researchers from all over the world. All together we will try to sketch the future for Gestalt Therapy:

- discussions about the different models in which therapies are evaluated: the medical one and the contextual one, which is starting to provoke a kind of a shift into the psychotherapy research field. Which in turn will have an impact on the future of GT. This will be explored with Bruce Wampold, the most prominent proponent of the contextual model in his keynote speech and in a panel in which he will be part of.
- discussions about how to involve clinicians into research projects
- discussions about the different methodologies compatible with GT which could help evidencing our modality. This will be explored with Robert Elliott, a great humanistic researcher and a specialist of methodologies in his keynote speech and in a panel in which he will be part of.
- detailed presentations of a GT compatible methodology which can lead to evidencing our modality: namely the SCTS (Single Case Time Series). This methodology will be supported by the EAGT RC SCTS Task Force in order to help launching SCTS projects in different countries
- presentations of different tools and ways to start implementing research in the training programs
- discussions about how to network in the global field of GT research
- possibilities to meet and contact international gestalt researchers
- space and time to do networking

Please, come and be part of this great event!

Vincent BEJA

Olaf Zielke

Chair of the EAGT Research Committee

German representative in EAGT

Project Called Humans of Gestalt



**www.
humans
of
gestalt
.com**

An Experiment in Dialogue

**Heather Anne Keyes
Kamila Bialy**

HUMANS

Born of an interest in preserving the lived experience of being with our colleagues, mentors and friends in Gestalt, as well as a deep curiosity about those we have not yet met, **we would like to invite the international Gestalt community to get to know each other better through this experimental series of informal documentary and personal interviews.**

We want to speak with individuals from any level of experience, location and background about what Gestalt is for you and who you are in Gestalt. We are happy to have the conversation with you individually, or to facilitate meetings between pairs or trios. We can meet in **English, Polish, Spanish, French and Italian** and will welcome collaborators in other languages as the project grows.

Just email us to set up a meeting time, and we will email you a link to speak via ZOOM for approx 45 min per session. The conversations will be recorded, and the material made available through our **Youtube Channel "Humans of Gestalt"**.

We are excited about the possibilities a "simple" encounter offers for presence, experience, spontaneity and dialogical embodied relation to work their Gestalt magic.

Interested? Email us at humansofgestalt@gmail.com or book a time on the website.

Donations welcome through www.humansofgestalt.com

Overview of meetings and conferences in 2021

EAGT meetings:

Spring meetings online 2021

March 4	Executive Committee meeting
March 5	Committee meetings
March 6	General Board meeting
March 7	Executive Committee meeting

The Executive Committee will have one extra online meeting in January.

EAP meetings:

March 11-13, 2021

**Heidelberg annual international conference: “From Unravelling to Stitching: Tailoring
Psychotherapy in the Face of Change”**

June 23 – 26, 2021

<https://www.psychotherapyresearch.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1401673>

EAGT meetings:

Autumn meetings in Madrid

September 9	Executive Committee
September 10	General Board
September 11	General Meeting of Members
September 12	Executive Committee

**Hamburg International conference on research in Gestalt Therapy:
September 24-26, 2021**

<https://research-conference-hamburg2021.com/>



Report from Human Resources & Social Responsibility Committee

Dear Colleagues,

In the HR&SR Committee we have decided to write about our activities in a different form than a report.

Since September of this year we have undergone some serious changes – Guus Klaren, Nurith Levi and Ivana Vidakovic have stepped back from being active members leaving their seats to Sara Hendrick, Katharina Stahlman and Tomaz Flajs.

Because of the crazy times we are living in we did not have the opportunity to say a proper “Goodbye” and “Thank you” to those who are stepping out and a proper welcome to those who are stepping in. So Nurith, Ivana and Guus: I am honored and grateful to have met you, worked with you, had dinners and breakfasts with you, organized a conference and writing together.

Although it was a lot of work, sometimes round the clock, it was a lot of joy as well. Specially because co working became also friendship. This I find very precious.

Please wait for me in the “back room”, from which you will be pulled out by the rest of us from time to time.

Sara, Katharina and Tomaz – welcome to our team! I wish we meet all together not only virtually very soon. During our last zooming I already felt connected with you, seems we share not only common values and interest but also same type of humor. We have many informal “joint dinners” to catch up.

The rest of you – dear team members – Michela, Dieter and Edu – I am glad you stayed on board!

As for our activities during the last year I leave the floor to Dieter Bongers with news from Belarus and Ukraine and Eduardo Salvador – to present you our cooperation with PBI, the raise of a “crisis platform” for supporting volunteers and connection to our Spanish colleagues involved in a social work.

HR&SR Committee

Joanna Kato

chair

First contact of the HR&SR committee with the social committee of the Spanish Association of Gestalt Therapy

A first contact with the committee took place in end October in order to know about their activities and explore ways of mutual collaboration and enrichment. We agreed to meet again, translate the HR&SR page of the EAGT into Spanish and participate in some of their meetings.

We learned that in Spain after 9 years of existence there is a committee and a social committee developing activities and writings on the social philosophy of Gestalt, social intervention and other activities. Here is some information.

Basic data

The committee is made up of up of 8 yearly renewed elected members. There is also an extended commission of nearly 40 or more. They meet once a month by videoconference and in person twice a year. During the annual sessions, they organize an open meeting for all members of the Spanish Association for Gestalt therapy (AETG) who are interested in social matters. In it there is space for participation, reflection, proposals, experiences, debate and a workshop.

Projects:

- a) Social Gestalt Mapping, published on Google Maps, where interested parties can position themselves with basic information, thus favouring knowing who we are, where we are, facilitating contacts, information exchanges, resources, collaborations, etc.
- b) Web-Forum moderating and promoting conversations among members. Any member of car request admission to this forum.
- c) Solidarity therapy Platform. During the COVID19 crisis this platform was a big success that managed to help 153 persons for three months. 12 coordinating meetings and 600 mails. The initial number of volunteer therapists were 500.

If you want to see the blog and some of these and other achievements of the Spanish Social Committee (in Spanish) please click: <https://gestalt-social-aetg.blogspot.com/>

PBI volunteer speaks about EAGT skype support

It is a pleasure for us to present some tangible feedback on our Skype platform of collaboration with PBI volunteers. This proves that the cooperation started by Peter Schulthess in 2008 and continued by Guus, Ivana is still bearing fruits. Thanks also to Joanna but particularly for Claude Falgas who was our French connection with PBI

volunteers. Thanks, Claude, for all your help and Skype support. Thanks also to Marion for writing the article that visualises our volunteer work that sometimes looks invisible.

Here is the article appeared on PBI Switzerland:

Psychological support for a greater serenity of the volunteers.

Having benefited from personalized psychological follow-up, Marion says he was a great help to him, in addition to collective mental health workshops. It encourages (future · e · s) volunteers to take advantage of this service, offered by PBI in partnership relationship with the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT), "It is about being in active listening and in a position of observer · tr gauging and bringing tools concerning their safety only. " as soon as they arrived on the field: "It seemed essential to me to start the sessions before any test: the psychologist allowed me to take a distant look at my experience and to manage this abrupt change more calmly". Today, Marion supports the communication work and of PBI France events through a temporary contract. The former volunteer considers this transition opportune for pursue differently her commitment for HR.

Marion Fichet, PBI Volunteer

(Claude Falgas, EAGT Therapist)

For more information (in French) please see:

https://www.peacebrigades.ch/sites/default/files/publication/pdf/05_FP_09-2020_FRANCAIS_A4.pdf

What is going on in Belarus?

By Dieter Bongers

Member of the Human Rights & Social Responsibility Committee

Though Belarus is not so far away from us, normally we do not care what is going on there. Mr Lukashenko is president there within the last 26 years. He is the last one from Soviet era.

He was an officer in the Red Army and some call him the last dictator in Europe. Belarus is till now the last country on Europe where death penalty is in force.

There are some others in the competition for this title, but Lukashenko is somehow the last son of Leonid Breschnew.

When they organized elections for president this year, he ordered to get all the candidates in prison that could be dangerous for him (Putin is an expert in this strategy), others were enforced to leave the country (picked up by police to the borders).

But this time he got winds of change - some relatively unknown women got in the race and organized meetings with thousands of participants. Big parts of Belarus population wanted a change.

Before the elections many observers were mobilized, but only few of them managed to get registered as observers. No international observers were allowed, except Russians. When the elections started, the observers in many places were not allowed inside (official reason: coronavirus) and they had to stand outside with binoculars.

Svetlana Tikhanovskaja (oppositional leader) had many difficulties in holding her legal pre-election rallies with the electorate: in some cities due to sudden construction works, in others due to clashes with other events (the biggest meeting in Minsk was stopped one day before it was due, official reason – because of the celebrations of the Day of Railway-workers).

The campaign decided that all those voting for Svetlana would wear a white bracelet so the observers outdoors could still count their votes; secondly, they would photograph their ballot and forward it to a central platform for counting.

August 9 – elections (5 candidates, including Svetlana Tikhanovskaja)

To prevent bloodshed, the three women asked people not to protest but to go to the election places and see the official results and the count. According to legislation, the

tally and results should be open to the public. People waited till 1am in most places but there were no results provided. Many of the electoral commission officers left through side or back entrances to their buildings. In those places which followed the normal protocol, coming out to the people outdoors and put their tallies outside on the walls, Svetlana got between 50-80%.

Several videos (secretly made by electoral commission officers) appeared in public with real names where you can hear how they constructed results in accordance with their planned figures. These results showed 80% for the current president, 10% for Tikhanovskaja. These were obvious and serious falsifications.

After midnight people, deeply offended, went out to the streets to protest. The government was well-prepared for that scenario and there were hundreds of police trucks everywhere, thousands of police.

The unrest is continuing actively since August 9 (day of elections). Within that period over 30 000 people have got arrested.

After the elections, the organizing committee reported that Lukashenko won with 80%.

Nobody who experienced the atmosphere in the country believed that.

Especially women started protest marches now since around 4 months.

Some had about 250-350.000 participants. Women, seniors, handicapped people – they have specific protest marches on weekly basis and every Sunday all type of protesters go out to the streets to say, “No to torture” and “Lukashenko, go away”.

The regime reacted with a lot of violence – over 30 thousand people were beaten and arrested, many of them were severely beaten up, 11 were murdered. All appeals to start legal cases were denied.

Since the Human Rights conference in Berlin 2018 we have a good contact to MIGI (Minsk Gestalt institute) and prepare seminars and workshop together.

Some of our friends from Ukraine, where we had a long period of training the trainers around the issue of trauma, help by doing supervision and lectures in Russian for Belarus.

Some information by firsthand in November 2020:

„Hallo my friends

There were 1050 people arrested today again. We are in courts making papers... Several colleagues got arrested, many doctors, patients... oncologist who has a list of 3 months patients waiting for his operations... he got 15 days of arrest.

2 of our psychoanalyst colleagues...

The trainer of our Institute, Gestalt-therapist, got 20 days of arrest... husbands, brothers, mothers... people of all ages...

We spent all night in front of police units – they even provide no info where a person is... No info – one if their way to torture the relatives...

Yesterday they repeated Aug 9-13 when they caught people from the streets having no connection to protests just to scare everyone... People are taken to prisons even from their apartments and houses.

Then, at least 3 hours (many the whole night), they were standing with hands up to the wall outdoors in pretty cold weather, with no difference to the age and capability (some of the arrested had broken arms or had other injuries and required medical service). When moved they got beaten up... all prisons are overfull and have covid as a present to any newcomer... “

This is serious violation of Human Rights in the middle of Europe.

So, what can be done:

You can collect money for the colleagues – when they were arrested, they get a fine what is often about twice a monthly salary, also the “accommodation costs and meals” in prison are to be covered. Funds are also needed for supporting project implemented by Belarusian Gestalt therapists on volunteer basis, aimed at providing psychological care to those who experienced violence due to repression (fees for premises to provide individual therapy, transport expenses to do field visits, legal advisory counselling, some management costs).

If you want to help financially contact the author.

More information from a member of the opposition:

Swetlana Alexijewitsch (72) is a Belarus author who got the Nobel prize a few years ago. One of her books is “Secondhand time. Living on the ruins of socialism.”

She was part of the coordination committee after August in Minsk, now she is living in Berlin to be treated in a hospital and because it's too dangerous in Minsk.

She gave an interview to “Spiegel” (20.11.20)

“I wonder if they really understand in the West, what is going on in Belarus”

....

“Women have kept the country together after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. Men were often desperate and started heavy drinking. Women with big bags were traveling to the neighbour countries to start business.... I was very impressed to see all these women during the demonstrations.

... The sanctions of the EU are good, but far from being enough. The Stops for important persons of the Regime going in EU countries are not very efficient. Their families are still allowed to travel. And Lukashenko had forbidden to his followers to leave the country.

It is possible to kick Belarus out of the International Banking System. Oil Industry is important for the country, there could be sanctions too. This would affect economy hard. The protests that would emerge then, would make Lukashenko helpless..

We want the transformation of the power in a peaceful manner. This Lukashenko cannot even imagine. He thinks he owns the power.” (Translation by DB)

As Gestalt therapists we need freedom of thoughts and freedom in choices to do our profession. Human Rights are not something “nice to have” its existential for health and its fundamental for Gestalt.

Please be aware Gestalt therapy without engaging for Human Rights is a “No Go”!

Dr. Dieter Bongers ,dieter@bongers.ch

Thank you! From Belarus.

Dear colleagues!

We are experiencing really difficult times. Our country is raped, daily raped. We have got exhausted of non-stop violence and torture towards peaceful population.

We have to live in non-stop fears of ourselves and work with clients bringing their fears to us. Covid-19 epidemics is also spreading rapidly at the same time but it goes to the ground while torture and complete disrespect to human dignity becomes a figure.

We have clients and colleagues disappearing just because they do not hide their civic position. Many of them get fired after they get released from prisons and come back to their jobs at state-run institutions.

We cry, we cry a lot – together with clients, after the sessions, on the way home, watching SMM, seeing police and military cars in our yards...

We know you think of us, support and pray. Thank you for your letters, for your thoughts, for your help with training and supervisions. We need this power of belonging and professional dignity to keep going.

Lena Grigoryeva,

on behalf of Minsk Gestalt Institute



Online support platform

After the crisis in Moria camp in Greece, we (the HR&SR committee) have sent a call to join an online therapy solidarity platform. It was sent to all the EAGT members and its aim is to provide support to international volunteers helping in the island of Lesbos.

To this call, we received a response of solidarity from 50 EAGT members.

This was very touching and human.

By that time, we have received a request for support from two organizations – looking to provide support to 20 people. After that things have slow down a bit - it appeared that people were exhausted and also had other resources.

We were ready with 50 therapists willing to help – so we thought to open a crisis response group that would be available also for cooperation with PBI, for support in Greece and for refugee support to volunteers in other feasible countries.

All this positive response shows to which extend our Gestalt therapy and human rights values are part of our activities and intentions as a community of Gestaltists. Bravo!

We hope we can find enough room to fill all the big amount of "solidarity" that is visibly available in us. That is why we are now seeking to identify another big NGO that can send to us requests for support from international volunteers in the field.

If you have any proposal with a personal contact with a member of a serious, psychosocially oriented NGO that requires our support, please contact:

Eduardo Salvador (esalvador1@yahoo.com) and Joanna Kato (joanna.kato@eagt.org) and we will look into each case.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all the therapists and the EAGT but also the HR&SR Committee for giving space to all these socially-oriented actions where I also see that I can expand myself and a human and as a community.

Let's keep up with the cause that unites us!

Eduardo Salvador HR&SR Committee.

Training in times of Corona

Dear colleagues,

Surely no one of you had ever anticipated taking part in such a total experience!

We encounter the challenge of every level of our existence, and the international spread, coupled with the novelty that this virus brings in its wings, turns it into the most dramatic, colossal event, and us into participants and observers at the same time...

With the passage of times, as we establish a new routine and acknowledge this new style of living in total solitude as our new reality, the horizon gets wider and I notice more and more issues that need to be addressed, re-evaluated, discussed with colleagues, in order to adjust to the new circumstances.

Training Gestalt on-line is one of these issues. It is one of my major concern always, and it becomes even more urgent now that everything we used to take for granted - becomes questionable.

- How do we proceed with training when we cannot run groups/classes/workshops etc.
- How do we preserve the trainees?
- How do we avoid losing fees, etc.

The main questions refer, I believe to the best-seller invention of our times – the internet: Can we continue training on-line?

Most of you, I believe have already turned some of the training into this mode, and must be asking yourself – how far can we go with this?

We would like to suggest a few thoughts that we have chewed on in the last weeks and we share them with you as an opening base-line, which we can further discuss. We are well aware that the differences we have always encountered between countries/institutes is now also tainted with the different regulations in your countries and the severity of illness in your immediate and general environment. Still, we have an enough-solid, common ground to be able to appreciate the situation and support each other's way of dealing with the problems.

Basically, our suggestion is to approve of some on-line training for reasons of:

- A. keeping meaningful contact with trainees
- B. continuation of learning,

- C. encouraging contact between members of the group,
- D. avoiding major waste of time...

We think sharing, supporting, ventilating, are important and can be "used" for learning purposes too. Of course, the theoretical, methodological parts of the training can be done this way – rather easily.

Some supervision and some personal or small group therapy can also be done this way.

What cannot be done is the actual practicum of trainees, and the more "clinical" part of the experiential parts. We believe every trainer knows that a Gestalt training cannot be certified without actual life experience...

The good news is that this course of a period is not going to take forever, so we need to be creative in terms of re-structuring the program, as well as the teaching methods and skills, and trust that in some near future time we will be able to complete what we are banned from doing now...

We do not mean to give strict regulations, rather we mean to suggest that each institute needs to evaluate and re-program the training programs that are running now according to your best judgement. You would have to consider what your trainers can offer, there may various reactions from group members, and the magic word remains as always
CREATIVE ADJUSTMENT.

Use what you have in a flexible way and trust the environment...

Take care and be safe,

Warm regards,

Nurith

Chair TSC

TSC suggestion for completing an accreditation process

Delayed by corona limitations

TSC is concerned over the moral and financial damage that Corona is causing to institutes that are "stuck" in the midst of an accreditation process, awaiting a visit of the accreditation committee, which cannot take place due to circumstances and is preventing us from finalizing the process.

In the effort to ease the situation, TSC is suggesting conducting a virtual accreditation visit, under the following strict conditions:

- A. This virtual process is an exceptional step, taken due to the limitations imposed by the pandemic situation. It will not be regarded as a precedent for any other circumstances.
- B. This option of a virtual accreditation visit will only be applied to institutes who are already in the process of accreditation, namely: have paid the fee of the visit and/or have sent in all the documents requested by the visiting committee/have been in contact with TSC delegate for the accreditation process.
- C. In any case of such virtual accreditation – it will be valid for one year only / or pending to the earliest possible date when a real visit can be organized.
- D. Such a visit calls for careful preparation and organization that would be the institute's responsibility: TSC would need to have a list of addresses of trainers, supervisors, therapists, trainees and graduates, who will be ready to engage in an e-conference at a pre-arranged time and agree to share their experience with the institute. (we foresee some potential confidentiality issues here.)
- E. In the case of joint accreditation with EAP – the agreement of the other organization is of course needed.

Italian Society of Gestalt Psychotherapists



Dear Colleagues,

In the spring of 2020 the new general board of Italian Society of Gestalt Psychotherapist was elected. The new general board is composed of gestalt psychotherapists who, for geographical and professional aspects, make our Italian NOGT quite representative. They are involved in various professional fields: public and private mental health services; supervisors and trainers within clinics and organizations; university; international child adoptions. A gestalt emerges which describes very well the whole psychotherapy movement in various fields.

I would like to introduce to you Rosanna Biasi Past-President (Vicenza), Graziana Busso (Augusta), Anastasia Corona(Cagliari), Eleonora Drago Secretary (Rome), Luciana Fancello Treasurer (Cagliari), Maria Grazia Fiorini (Udine) Pier Luigi Righetti (Venice) Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb Honorary President (Siracusa), and Monica Bronzini President (Pisa).

The mission of our General Board is to co-create with the SIPG members a fertile field in which to guarantee scientific exchanges, mutual knowledge, inspiration and professional support and updating.

To this purpose we will create a space of open discussion on institutional and cultural scientific issues, initiatives and growth, exchange of experiences to offer members a continuous human and professional enrichment.

We are organizing a webinar on Trauma on 8th of April 2021, which will be a moment of exchange of studies and theoretical-clinical practice in a friendly environment, so to provide a sure ground to our members.

10th December 2020

Monica Bronzini

EULOGY – Prof. Shraga Serok

1929 – 2020 by Nurith Levi



On October 19, 2020 Prof. Shraga Serok passed away in Israel, at the age of 91.

Born in Poland, he spent his youth years in Siberia, to where his family was deported by the Soviet Regime. With the end of WWII they were transported to a refugee camp in Berlin, from where they eventually were allowed to immigrate to Israel in 1949, very soon to be drafted to the IDF for three years of mandatory service. He considered this period as his Israeli forming years, having experienced three former cultural re-locations. No wonder he was always drawn to working with new immigrants, researching

immigration as a social/cultural phenomenon.

He studied social work at Tel Aviv university and worked for several years as Youth probation officer, his curiosity and professional ambition driving him to seek advanced studies abroad. Thanks to a scholarship he enrolled at the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio, which he graduated in 1975, while at the same time training and graduating the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland.

Upon his return to Israel, he was invited to join the staff of the Tel Aviv University, school of social work, as a lecturer, and soon hereafter he established a post-graduate Gestalt program, which started as an experiential growth and development group for professionals and developed into a two-years training program that combined theoretical and experiential training. This was made possible thanks to a grant, which was given to him by the Ratner family of Cleveland, in appreciation of his excellent personal work with one of its members. The grant enabled a few yearly scholarships for students of that same program, which was led and directed by Shraga for 18 years.

Shraga left Cleveland with a bag full of personal and professional contacts, which he fostered for years. Among his former trainers were Joseph Zinker, and Erv and Miriam Polster, who willingly accepted his invitation to offer workshops and seminars in Israel. Thus, it happened that throughout the 80'-90', the small Israeli community enjoyed a taste of the West Coast Gestalt.

In further years Shraga became one of the central founders of the school of Social Work at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, which he headed between 1990 – 1994.

In the Field of Israeli Psychotherapy Shraga is considered the pioneer, who introduced Gestalt to clinical and academic institutions. He was one of the most popular conveners

at the yearly conferences of the Israeli clinical psychologists' association, he trained and supervised psychiatrists, medical doctors, social workers, and was a most appreciated member of the local helping professions community.

Parallel to his public activity, Shraga also worked as therapist in private practice, leading groups, working with couples, supervising and mentoring advanced professionals. He published two books and numerous papers on the application of Gestalt Therapy to various populations, participated in conferences in Israel and abroad. Long before our field was ripe to integrate research in clinical work - Shraga was convinced of the need of evidence-based results to support our therapeutic work. He was eagerly supporting any research project that occurred around him. He was an elderly scholar with a child-like, never-ending quest for learning, acquiring more knowledge, more information, new competencies, better understanding.

Shraga was a warm, sensitive, wise person who easily made contact and gained one's trust thanks to his honest, open and empathetic way of communication. Full of zest and humor, he was a gifted, creative therapist, a sought-after supervisor, supportive yet challenging. To me he was also a loyal and caring friend and consultant.

His family, his friends and colleagues, and his many students, supervisees and patients, cherish his memory and mourn his death.



COVID-19, Conspiracy theories, Climate Change, and the rise of fascism

What is the role of Psychotherapy?

I recently facilitated the Annual British Gestalt Journal Day on the theme of “necessary derangement – living and working in a changing field”. The day was an invitation to consider the role of psychotherapy in a time of collective trauma.

The seminar coincided with the UK just having entered a second lockdown and the US elections finally being called, with the astonishing development that the loser of the election declared himself the winner.

The circumstances couldn't have highlighted more starkly, that we have collectively entered a time of derangement, where the most mundane of habits, like meeting friends, hugging each other or eating together are no longer something we can take for granted; where democracy and a shared sense of consensus reality are being eroded and where the hopes for the future of our children are giving way to a bleak reality of climate disruption and species extinction.

Over 100 participants came together from many different countries to reflect on what is being asked of us in times where the ordinary arrangements don't seem to be working anymore. The main question that ran through the day was whether the psychotherapeutic profession itself is being deranged by the enormity of the challenges the world is facing.

And indeed, Covid has done the seemingly impossible. It has deranged the sanctity of the therapy room- and so we work from our own homes, talk to clients from their cars, their kitchens, or sometimes from park benches or even forests. We have stepped over a threshold into new territory. Necessity has made this possible, regardless of modality and theoretical orientation. The field is opened up to experiment with what happens when we invite the world into the conversation, as a third other.

In the current field conditions, our entanglement with the field and the conditions of the field itself can no longer be ignored. Some themes emerge as figural for a large collective of people worldwide. The heroic stories of eternal ascension, human supremacy, white supremacy, male supremacy, western supremacy, are crumbling. The cruelty of these ideologies has become hard to ignore. It has torn scars into the fabric of the world that are so deep that they can't be healed by ordinary medicine. Most of us have become colonisers and colonised at the same time.

Recently we have seen some of the monuments to these ideologies tumble and fall, but from a psychological point of view it is important to ask what is engraved in us. How do we deal with the monuments that have been erected in our minds during all these years of socialisation - and what damage has been caused by these introjected narratives of modernity? How do they show up in our interactions with clients and in our outlook on the world? What damaging beliefs are engraved in our theories and what harm do they cause through me, my actions and my non-actions?

In order to dismantle that which is toxic in our culture, we may have to come together and provide support and containment for each other so that we can begin a process of personal and professional de-colonisation.

In urgent times most people hunt for solutions and answers, but it is difficult not to grasp for the same old strategies that got us into this trouble in the first place. Einstein famously said that we can't expect to solve problems with the same thinking we used when we created them; I therefore suggest that most of us don't really know how to respond to the enormity of our times and I question those that proclaim that they do.

So instead of muscling through adversity, a radical step may be to admit that we are lost – to hold our expertise and experience in one hand and to open up to uncertainty on the other. This is an uncomfortable position to hold in a culture that is based upon control. As psychotherapists we know that uncertainty is the most unbearable of states. For many, even certainty of catastrophe is easier to bear than uncertainty. And maybe that's where psychotherapists have a role to play. We know something about containment in these vulnerable states where the known reality is slowly crumbling and the new is not yet in sight.

In these highly uncertain times, derangement without containment can lead to fragmentation, polarisation and reactivity in individuals as well as in the wider society.

And this is what we see in many countries, where subgroups shift into increasingly extreme positions, where social media algorithms provide a vehicle to increase division and fragmentation and where paranoid conspiracy theories seem more plausible than the fact that we are utterly inter-related and inter-dependent with a world that we have driven to the brink of collapse. For the first time since the second World War, fears about a rise in fascism are openly discussed in the mainstream media. In a state of fear, people are at risk of jumping to easy conclusions, following a path that promises certainty, even if this certainty is based on brittle ground.

So, what is the role of psychotherapy in a time of derangement?

Can we support the culture at large to bear what feels unbearable or even to heal from these collective wounds?

Before we can even begin to guide others, we may need to get to know the terrain and this may well entail a willingness to be undone ourselves. Where are the spaces that offer the necessary steps into this derangement?



The BGJ day showed that there is a willingness in the community to step into vulnerability and that there is a hunger to reflect on these complex issues. So, let us come together and infect each other – not with pathogens, but with passion, courage and with the intimacy of our vulnerability. Let's create safe spaces to be lost together and see what emerges.

Steffi Bednarek

<http://www.psychotherapyinbrighton.com/>

Information about Re-registration

For many members there is a Re-registration every 5th year. To find more details check bylaws and statutes. But important:

1. You are invited to the reregistration, and you receive a separate invoice from PayPal. If your certificates are about to expire in 2020, and you have not yet received an invite contact us at info@eagt.org asap.
2. Therefore, you will receive 2 invoices in a re-registration year. We have had members refusing to pay membership twice when one was for re-registration and the other was for yearly fee, due to misunderstanding this.
3. You can still send us attachments to upload, but we now also have set up a system for self-service upload of documents. So far only for individuals, but we are working on same system for Organizations. We will have to prioritize those members that help us in uploading themselves.
4. Re-registration is not a formality. You need to upload correct documents, pay fee, and then application is presented to the Secretary of the Executive Committee. When/if approved by the Secretary of the Executive Committee, you will receive new certificates as attachment on an email. The certificate can then be printed. The certificate is a DISPLAY COPY ONLY. Only when you are listed on <https://ismember.eagt.org> with proper comment on FM/SV/GPO etc. are you certified.

Due to the number of re-registrations to process, Executive Committee has decided to grant a period of grace. Therefore, you will not be removed from <https://ismember.eagt.org> before July 1, 2021, provided all documents necessary to re-register are being uploaded before January 1, 2021.

If documents are not uploaded before January 1, 2021 the full membership will be changed into an associate membership January 1, 2021.

5. If you are no longer working as a therapist with clients, you can retire yourself from the process, and become a retired member. If you have stepped back for different reasons, and want to pause, you can change status to Associated member. But you can reapply at any time and get your certification in place.

Remember: Backoffice facilitates the approval process, but we do not approve. We forward to the Secretary of the Executive Committee, who approves. We then send welcome letters and certificate copies to the members. We do not appoint honorary members either, we might would like to do that to some of you, but we don't.

« Astrid's Interview »

Dear Mônica Alvim, I am happy to welcome you in « the interview » section of this EAGT's Winter 2020 newsletter issue.

The aim of the section is to have a space in our newsletter to allow members of EAGT to share about who they are, their practice, activities, their links to EAGT, ... in order to support creating ties, curiosity to go towards and discover the people who form our EAGT community.

Mônica, we met some years ago, at a dinner in Paris, and I appreciated the energy and vibes of your presence. I am grateful you accepted this invitation of mine, here.

I had sent you the habitual frame of questions I send to my interviewees. You chose to write in one go and in length – I receive it as a gift.

I hope and wish all of our EAGT newsletter readers will find interest and joy to meeting you through these lines; I certainly did!



First of all, I want to thank you, Astrid, for the kind invitation to this interview. You asked me how I would introduce myself, here I go... my name is Monica, I am a 59 years old woman, a Gestalt therapist, current scientific director of the Brazilian Association of Gestalt-Therapy (ABG) and recently elected president of ABG for the 2021/2022 biennium. I am also a professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the city where I was born, where I live and work.

Introducing myself in a more personal way, my whole life I have been curious about everything, the mysteries of nature, the stars shining, the trees blooming and then losing their leaves.

Living in a country where social inequality is extreme, I perceived early the pain, the poverty. I became curious about the differences among people. Their skin, their faces, expressions, ways of living, being. I love to be a testimony of the human diversity, and that's at the core of my choice for being a Gestalt therapist.

My life has also been marked by a special appreciation of freedom and the right of each person to be and choose their paths, the right to free existence. Born in a family open to dialogue, I never conformed to arbitrary and unjustified prohibitions or interdictions and felt outraged by oppression and violence. As a child, I felt disgusted with situations of injustice and oppression, before which, I used to argue, tirelessly and fearlessly.

Trans-form-action has assumed the place of a key word in my life: action that implies a movement to go beyond the form, to configure it in another way. Which is work, in a general philosophical sense. What we call creative adjustment could be thought in this way; work as transformation does not happen without getting in touch with the novelty, the other, with his or her difference and producing expressive gestures-movements which give meaning to the existence and to the world.

My professional trajectory is an existential trajectory through work, in this desiring exercise of trans-forming and be transformed by the field. Social activism and causes have always been present in my life, with the intensity and passion that moves me. They took place first within collectivities. Student militancy, union, social struggles.

I came across Gestalt therapy through existentialism. My first enchantment with psychology happened when I read a paper from Ludwig Binswanger, at the beginning of graduation course. This text unveiled a comprehension - that I already had without knowing it - about what is the existence. I do not have a way to precisely define this kind of comprehension I had, nor the feeling. I am just able to describe the power of the excitement that has moved me in the direction of Gestalt therapy when I met Jorge Ponciano, my professor at the university, and heard from him that the existential freedom was at the ground of this approach.

Then, with my training in Gestalt-Therapy, also under Jorge's supervision, I started to work with individual as well as group therapy, distancing myself from social movements and exercising with others, a more intimate transformation space, based on fragility and suffering, understanding in my own experience that the clinic is a political space, as proposed by Laura Perls. A space where the silence that welcomes the other speaks and allows her/him to perceive, transcend and transform her/his existence and the world.

After a long journey working with Gestalt therapy, as a therapist, supervisor and trainer, I resumed my academic studies and started to work as a researcher and university professor in the undergraduate psychology course, where the dialogue between Gestalt Therapy, art and phenomenology took a central place.

Since childhood my contact with art has been very present. I practiced theater, dance and music, which I did not continue to do as an adult, however, this experience remained as a part of me. I began to realize, over time, that the dialogue between art and gestalt-therapy represented a fertile possibility for widening our perspective. My contact with Michael Vincent Miller and Jean-Marie Robine, whose works make this dialogue with art and aesthetics, was very intense, in terms of finding answers to many questions I had and has inspired me to follow this path.

My encounter with phenomenology produced a great enchantment when I comprehended the task of philosophizing not as a rational activity in the search for certainty, but as an experience of astonishment that moves the subject, curiously, in search of meaning, incarnated in the world. Merleau-Ponty is a passion, in whose work I find many resonances with Gestalt therapy. His work on the body, movement, art and expression as responses to the field, have many contributions to broaden our insight about clinical theory and method.

Experiment-action and the body are central themes in my work. The theme of experiment-action emerged from an immense concern regarding my theoretical-practical training in Gestalt-Therapy, when I perceived a division still present in Brazil during my formation, between the 80s and 90s, which seemed to reproduce the old redskin / paleface quarrel that emerged in the early days of Gestalt-Therapy in the United States. From the contact with phenomenology and art, I began to realize that an investigation about the meaning and the foundations of the so-called experiments in the clinical method of Gestalt-Therapy could be fertile.

It was from this investigation, carried out during my PhD studies, that the body assumed the central place in the theoretical and methodological formulations that I have been developing throughout my trajectory as a researcher in Gestalt-Therapy.

At this point, I think it would be interesting to answer your question about my experience of teaching Gestalt therapy at the university. Psychoanalysis and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies are also hegemonic in Brazilian universities, but existential, phenomenological and humanist clinics, where Gestalt-Therapy is included, are also present, albeit in a minority.

Over the years, Brazilian Gestalt Therapy has occupied a significant space, being present in many universities. I work at a public university, UFRJ, where postgraduate research is carried out, in addition to undergraduate teaching. This gives us the opportunity to train researchers who expand and continue the theoretical and methodological investigation of Gestalt therapy.

This makes me think of one of your questions about the limits and possibilities of Gestalt Therapy from my perspective. Gestalt-therapy is a clinical approach that has remained, predominantly, in the field of practice. Among the many stories in our history is that Fritz Perls did not like or did not have much writing skills. He was very sensitive

and had an enormous capacity to perceive and read what was happening in the field. But he didn't write much. This is reflected in the fact that most of his books are transcripts of speeches of practical work, which is also reflected in Paul Goodman's participation in our inaugural book. Laura also wrote little. Isadore From, ditto. And, I could mention other important names in Gestalt Therapy, but also lesser-known names. Many of the students who are interested in Gestalt-Therapy at the university are attracted to the practice, by our peculiar way of speaking, teaching, making contact. And many of these students also are not fond of it or have difficulties in writing. I have heard and said many times that the transmission of knowledge in Gestalt-Therapy was predominantly oral, that we do not have a tradition in writing and research.

I do not believe this is a natural phenomenon, but that it points to a dichotomy between experience and reflection, practice and theoretical thinking that expresses “sick” ways of doing science and philosophy. The introjected and predominant model of science that we have learned to recognize as the only legitimate science - which is a big mistake - has generated ways of researching and writing that are almost impeding approaches like ours, which work from experience and corporeality.

The complexity, non-objectivity and clarity of phenomena requires from us, in order to study them, the courage to challenge traditional epistemological models and the invention / adoption of other models of knowledge production in the field of science. For this, we face risks and challenges, which, as proposed by Edgard Morin, involve adding to the sapiens dimension, the demens dimension, which we control to exercise rational and critical thinking. This, sometimes, sterilizes life and thought.

I think that Gestalt therapy has the potency to go beyond practice, to produce knowledge, research and writing. In order to achieve it, we must practice and expose our experiential and sensitive style, which is no less profound, less legitimate. Like other minorities, we have so far remained invisible and not heard in the scientific domains, but we need to talk in order to be heard. Gloria Anzaldúa, a Latin American researcher, black and lesbian, who lives and works in the United States, wrote a magnificent text entitled “Speaking in tongues: a letter to women writers from the third world”. She writes in the form of a letter that speaks of this invisibility. She claims to feel robbed of her native language when writing and this postpones this act that appears to her as so artificial. Could it be that we, gestalt-therapists, throughout our experiences at the university, have not been robbed of our language of experience? Do we feel obliged to write in another language, the dominant scientific one, to be a part of the scientific world?

Today, in the scenario of Brazilian post-graduate studies in psychology, we have a movement, albeit incipient, of opening and developing new writing policies that is very favorable for us. The dichotomy of poetry and prose that Perls and Goodman addressed so well, now, has, in our country, a space for being overcome, which implies integrating the aesthetic and expressive dimension to scientific production. The transition in the

humanities from a scientific or interpretive paradigm to another ethical and an aesthetic one is a reality that has already been established.

In this situation, Gestalt therapy is emerging in the production of knowledge and in the invention of ways of thinking, researching and writing. What is already a reality, appearing slowly compared to other approaches, but already presenting itself. Our space in federal universities has grown, both in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in strict sense (master's and doctorate). Currently some of them have lines of research where Gestalt-Therapy is included.

This has been resulting in a growing production of academic works such as doctoral theses and master's dissertations, in addition to articles published in scientific journals and books. Dialogues with phenomenology are very frequent and have turned remarkable in the style of Brazilian Gestalt therapy.

The last aspect I would like to underline refers to the possibilities that Gestalt-Therapy has to work in social contexts. Perls and Goodman emphasize the intrinsic strength of the social dimension, which they consider intrinsic to the way in which every problem presents itself. This perspective is political. It has enormous political strength to develop a view where ideological and social forces are considered in the production of subjects and suffering, and to develop models of analysis and intervention focused on broader social phenomena.

Gestalt-Therapy has, in my view, a huge contribution to make to society, in advancing issues that are currently in evidence in Brazil and abroad, emerging with force from the social and political contradictions that have been deepened for years and that are heightened in the current ethical and political crisis. As a theory that does not understand social and psychic, individual and society as dimensions dichotomously separated, it has the power to contribute to think the production of subjectivities, illness and suffering, as non-subjective processes, but crossed by structural dimensions such as gender, race and social class. In our research group, those are subjects we have been studying from Gestalt-Therapy perspective. Our interest was first of all guided by our activities in favelas, which gave us the opportunity to be at the margins of our society and to feel, being closer to them, that those structural problems must be integrated in our ways of seeing the human phenomenon.

I have been working for 10 years with young people and children from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro creating a model of interdisciplinary practice that expands Gestalt therapy beyond the office. I nominated it as "Gestalt-therapy at the boundary", in reference to the title of Laura Perls' book. Inviting them to research infancy and adolescence in their here and now situation, we intend to produce creative movements that could break the cultural sedimentations that are in the body as fixed habits reproduced automatically, without realizing, and thus recover and creative freedom that is a condition to transgress the norms and transform life and the world, re-signifying their existences.

Working at the university nourishes me from the contact with students, from the provocation of youth, from contact with diversity, from the requirement to listen to the contemporary situation in the task of building a living space for the production of knowledge. The time-space of the classroom, of the activities at the boundary and of research-action rekindles the collective voice in the task of transform-action, a voice that has never been silenced in my life.

I conclude this interview with gratitude for the opportunity to look back and integrate parts of my life and work experience, which allows me to affirm a militant belief in the potency of Gestalt therapy as a proposal that intertwine ethics, esthetics and political, allowing to keep alive the dream and utopia that moves people to build a better world.

Mônica Botelho Alvim

Rio de Janeiro, 01.12.2020

If one wants to contact you? I can be reached at mbalvim@gmail.com .

www.monicaalvim.com

I am touched by the depth, simplicity, and density of your sharing, dear Mônica. Thank you very much and “com prazer” meeting some time, somewhere, again.

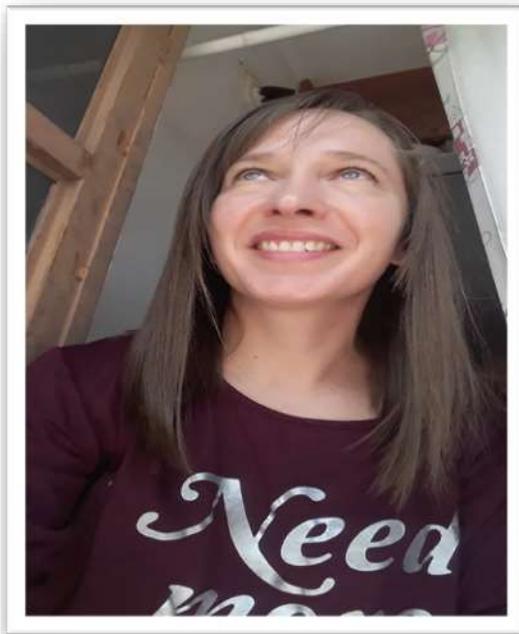
Astrid Dusendschön, December 2020.

Chatting with.... “Humans of Gestalt”

Every now and then, Astrid Dusendschön invites colleagues for a chat around little things that do lots.

In this EAGT Winter 2020 newsletter issue, Heather Anne Keyes and Kamila Bialy agreed to join this proposal.

Dear Heather and Kamila, thank you for accepting this interview. Thanks for thinking of us – I am surprised by how well-received this project has been and appreciate the support we have found in the community.



AD: First, I would like to invite you to present yourselves professionally and, if you wish, personally, and also how you got to meet

H: I am currently a work-from-home mom of two kids, two dogs and two hamsters in Durango, Mexico. My undergraduate studies were in social anthropology/Latin American Culture, and I did my MA in Gestalt Psychotherapy here in Mexico where I have lived for 19 years and been practicing for 15.

I coordinate the Asociación Mexicana de Psicoterapia Gestalt Contemporánea to support the Gestalt therapy community through professional development and networking opportunities such as

conferences, workshops, residentials, peer groups as well as editing our semi-formal Journal. (www.gestaltmexico.org).

As far as I know Kamila and I have only ever been on opposite sides of a dancefloor/conference dinner... so we are “internet friends” but we have friends in common and are connected through our exchanges of ideas on the IAAGT member email list. Now, we share pictures of our pets and my kids, silly day-to-day thoughts, worries and life events with each other.

K: Since you studied in Poland some years back, perhaps, Heather, our paths crossed then :D

I live with my partner in one of the Polish cities and yet in every possible moment we travel and stay for a while with our two cats in the countryside.

I work both as a sociologist (researcher and academic teacher) and a therapist (work individually, with groups, and train students of psychotherapy in Poland and abroad). I also am a member of New Gestalt Voices where I can exploit to the fullest my belonging to two different professional worlds.

AD: You have set up together the project "Humans of Gestalt". When and how did this project emerge for you both?

H: This project formally began for me with the following statement on the IAAGT email list:

11/29/2019 4:07:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

I am willing to start a series of video interviews with founders/past presidents/elder members and whomever else wishes to participate and upload them for AAGT.... I am curious, trying to be constructive... I have been meaning to ask these kinds of questions – I have been trying to figure out "who's who" and piecing organizational history together for myself since 2012 and wanting to do something to support the community having a sense of self, history, identity and lineality (if that's a word).... much of why I am moved to come "back" now and propose these particular things - have to do with Bud's (Feder) death and thinking of all the things we never talked about - same experience I have had with three other friends and colleagues who died with interviews and projects pending between us over the past couple of years. AND it is about my ridiculous creative energy building up again and wanting to play more and seeing "what's next."

Kamila responded to the post, and we built a “guide” for the interviews from my initial set of questions. I borrowed the name from the “Humans of New York/Bombay etc.” series which collects short auto-biographical bits from everyday people. Knowing Kamila and I share an enjoyment of photography, we decided to collect some of our Humans images from different Gestalt events to form a collage and our webdesigner Jorge Bueno put together the “look” for the project from there.



K: I immediately got fond of Heather's idea, and this exciting Gestaltung started with both of us on board. My contribution was to approach an everyman woman of our Gestalt community, and in so doing to encourage people to form this world-wide process with us.

AD: Have there been elements that have made the process slowing down and difficult, have there been elements that have made the process easing and speeding up?

H: The response from our friends and colleagues and from the international Gestalt community has made this project largely a joy to bring together. People have been open, candid, trusting, and insightful. The interviews have felt intimate, and when we are able to

physically meet as a community again, I am sure I will feel like I have about a hundred new friends.

It does feel massively strange to imagine how "seen" we will have been though, as I am particularly prone to work "backstage" and tend to hide in plain sight at conferences etc. with administrative functions rather than taking a microphone or stepping on stage if I can possibly avoid it.

Technology and the exponential growth and normalization of ZOOM meetings has obviously made the nature of this project "click" with the state of the world these past few COVID months. Among lockdowns and uncertainty, these are times which have us all looking for connection and community, dealing with who we are and how we are in isolation, understanding what our relationship is with others, with our work, with our world and with Gestalt.

We have had some issues with boundaries and expectations, both among ourselves and with participants in some cases, but have generally enjoyed the clarity that these challenges have brought us about who we are, the values we hold and how we choose to work.

It has been empowering to work as independent “researchers” and to step outside of the pressure to “do research” in an empirical tradition... we have been enjoying the mixture of creative, multi-media documentary work with an investigative spirit and the freedom from pressures to “format and publish”- we have made the process transparent, and allow viewers, participants and listeners to make their own meanings from their interaction with the material we have been able to generate. This truly is a relational, co-created experience.

K: I like what you are saying here, Heather, about freedom to act on our own, which eventually led us to respond unintentionally to a larger field’s needs. From the very first moment people were immensely appreciative, both the interviewees and the audience. We hadn’t planned it this way, but the launch of the project coincided with Covid’s outbreak. All over the world we felt lost and isolated, we desperately needed to connect, to feel one another, to understand some deeper sense of it all. So, the first months were both frantic and exciting for our project.

And with the time some tiredness came; we had been hyperactive all the way through and there came a moment that called for self-care. Again, this coincided with Covid’s imposing regime: people were fed up with Zooming, they were starting holidays, etc. On the other hand, a social media effect started to set in. As a consequence, some people wanted to have a retake of their interviews, some were dissatisfied with the statistics of their performance, etc.

Autumn has brought in a new energy, good and warm as an autumn sunlight. We have accepted two new people on board: Tomas Diveky and Beatrice Valantin. We have felt supported, and so each of us could start to envisage her own ways of extending our project and also prepare to present it at some research conferences.

AD: Did you set yourself any objectives when beginning with this project, have you been surprised by what emerged at its contact with the environment vs what you had imagined?

We have been reflecting and dealing with those emergent figures through our own newsletter, sharing thoughts and allowing change to happen there. We have been encouraged to present and will be at the Research Conference in Hamburg 2021, and will likely begin some “sub series” threads on recurring themes that people have brought to their interviews.

I am starting a “remembering Laura” series in the Oral History vein, and can easily imagine discussions around death and dying, race and racism, social justice, gender and sexuality from a HUMAN perspective among therapists developing in the future like the ones Kamila is co-creating with NGV.

The conversation and the connections with colleagues are inseparable from my own work on other projects here in Mexico and internationally, especially in relation to issues of diversity, inclusion and equity. The systemic issues of power and privilege that

have come up in the interviews are significant, and the potential for Gestalt therapy and the people involved in it to do meaningful work is absolutely undeniable.

K: My interest has started to focus on generational difference; the resulting excitement does not concern 'cohorts' in demographic terms, rather 'generations' defined by the shared historical life experience as well as the shared symbolic references. In cooperation with New Gestalt Voices Radio I intend to invite guests, Humans interviewees, and in this way open up a forum on generational difference, what it is like, what kind of processes it triggers, how we are dealing with it, why it is important, why we keep avoiding it, etc.

It is surprising to me that even though our objectives were not related to a social critique approach, just the opposite, to connect, to meet, to create an archive of what is, power related themes started to emerge and what we did, we did not ignore them.

AD: What was your initial intention, has it changed more or less with its implementation?

We are happy that we decided to take a more personal turn, leaving the "talking about theory" parts for another day, and are pleased to have moved beyond a single organizational community as we realized how deep the waters are and how far-reaching the roots and branches of the Gestalt community really are.

We are also satisfied with having made the choice to include a diversity of voices, languages, ages and levels of experience rather than just giving more airtime to the established "figures" in the Gestalt world.

How many interviewees have you had at this time where we are speaking? What countries / continents do they come from, what typology (students / young professionals / confirmed professionals)? Dispatch ladies / gents?

The numbers from the project are quite impactful for us to see:

40.7k views, 4.9k hours watched, 1.1k subscribers on youtube

192 videos, 7 languages (English, Polish, Spanish, French, Slovak, Czech, Greek)

4 regular interviewers, one guest interviewer

We will present more details and share more at our upcoming presentations at the IAAGT Online Research Colloquium on Jan 31st, 2021 which you can register for here:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/AssociationForTheAdvancementOfGestaltTherapy/ResearchCommitteeOnlineColloquiumSeriesRegistration>

We have been officially accepted to present at The Gestalt Research Conference in Hamburg, Germany in Sept 2021 <https://research-conference-hamburg2021.com/>

AD: How is your project financed?

We would like to remind people that this project is independent, so we truly appreciate any support you would like to offer as a donation:

https://paypal.me/heatherannekeyes?locale.x=en_US

AD: How and where to find Humans of Gestalt:

Humans of Gestalt website: www.humansofgestalt.com

Humans of Gestalt on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIdyGm_4yX10StN70_pnXxQ

And the audios are uploaded weekly to our webpage as an ad-free podcast.

AD: Dear Heather and Kamila, thank you for your time and availability to join in this chat and accept to play with me. Congratulations for your presentation-to-come in Hamburg 2021. And yes, I wish this will create new forms of contact when we meet “live” in congresses etc. All the best to you and hats off, ladies!



As I had the pleasure to join this project end of last August with an interview by you, Heather, I'd like to add my personal experience. When I came across information on your project and the proposal “any one ‘human of gestalt’ can join”, my initial push was “go”! Then, things became more concrete... Heather, you contacted me, a date was set... and my thinking started - “what on earth am I putting myself into agreeing to

do, what intention is my “go” made of, who do I think I am to contribute, I have nothing interesting to say “, ... simply put: I was scared and my neurosis had some space to “shoot up”.

Then we discussed, Heather, and you allowed things for me to calm down by outlining that nothing would be put online if I did not want to, or could be taken off from youtube at any time, later. Relief.

At the moment the interview started I realized I had not “prepared” anything - I could have been watching for example former interviews and get an idea of the questions. OK, I thought, here I am (again...) jumping in the water with lots of “play” energy...

Well, I have to say that I am most happy to have done so and to rely on your warm welcoming and tranquille presence, Heather, which allowed me “just to be”.

I liked being surprised by your questions and letting me go with the flow, with this subtle attention not to escape from the intimacy of our contact that invited to be fully present and at the same time not getting into some kind of personal “striptease”, if I may use this word.

I was happy to have “dared” the interview experience. Then came another step: how do you feel when you see yourself on a video, hear your voice and listen to what you say? This can be quite an experience and taming to go through.

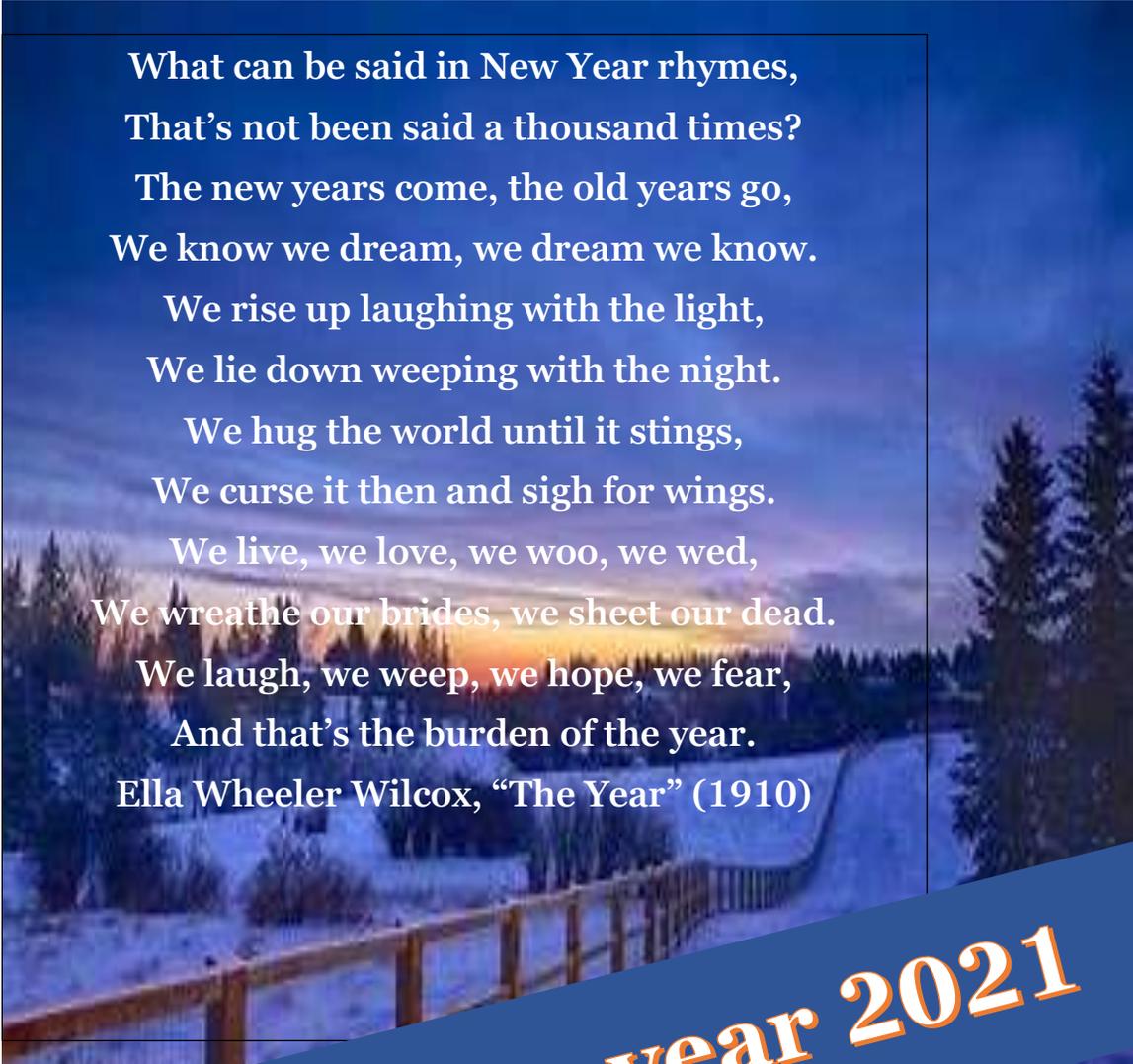
Post-contacting process was on its way, and some months later, now, I see this as an experience that sustains growing, and also that contributes integration of one’s own lifepath – at least that’s what it has been for me.

I can only but encourage ones and others to join!

Warmly,

AstridDecember 2020.

We send our best wishes for a new year



What can be said in New Year rhymes,
That's not been said a thousand times?
The new years come, the old years go,
We know we dream, we dream we know.

We rise up laughing with the light,
We lie down weeping with the night.

We hug the world until it stings,
We curse it then and sigh for wings.

We live, we love, we woo, we wed,
We wreath our brides, we sheet our dead.

We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,
And that's the burden of the year.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, "The Year" (1910)

Happy new year 2021